

Greek Meets Greek

"When Greek meets Greek, then's the tug of war."

BY

VEE DEE ESS.

Virginia Dee Sappington

ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR.

Published by
McCowat-Mercer Company
Jackson, Tennessee

1526
2
\$33

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By

VEE DEE ESS.

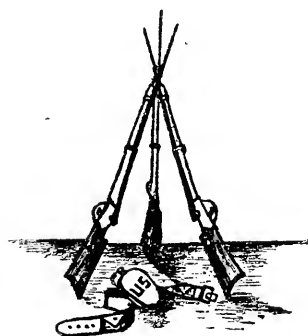
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DEC -7 1920

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To Crox Who Sleeps
in Flanders Field.



“She said, ‘I print ’em!’
‘Nay, nay,’ said he;
‘It shan’t be done—
I’ll never agree.’

“They chewed the rag
For many a day;
But, being a nurse,
She must have her way.

“So to the woman’s
Dog-goned persistence
Is due the blame
For this book’s existence.”

Bee O. Bee.

October, 1919.

ADVANCE AGENT.



The fact that a Foreword is seldom read has not altered my determination to offer an explanation in some form.

These honest-to-goodness letters were written by a sergeant in the U. S. Army and a nurse in civil life. There have been no additions whatever, and but few deductions.

The correspondence originated in a very singular manner and resulted in — but here are the letters; read them and have an example of *Truth* being stranger than *Fiction*.

INTRODUCTION.



Time—Dec. 19, 1917.

Place—A little town in Tennessee.

Scenes—(a) Indoors.

A quiet, peaceful, inviting room, ruddy with firelight.

A clock ticking lazily.

A charming convalescent patient (Mrs. J—) reading the Memphis Commercial Appeal.

A trained nurse (Miss Ess) planning how to get even with Fate.

(b) Outdoors.

“And the air is full of snowflakes
And the bare trees shake and tremble;
Deeply sighing are the branches
With their lifting and subsiding
At the passing of the nightwind
As he howls and hurries southward.”

Miss Ess—“Gee, I wish you’d listen at that wind! I want to get out and rush around with it, for I feel as wild and wayward as the night outside and I’m just dying to play havoc with something or somebody.

As Fate has decreed that I can’t go to France,
Then I’d like to get out and play havoc with
Fate.”

Mrs. J.—“Good! Here’s your chance. Read this.”

Miss Ess—(reading this “ad” from the Commercial Appeal) :

NO LETTER FOR 13 MONTHS.

Sergt. Bee O. Bee of Memphis, now a member of Company E, 153d Infantry, at Camp Beauregard, La., writes a peculiar letter, in which he makes a novel suggestion. He writes about Sergt. Croxton of the same company.

Sergt. Croxton, he says, has been a soldier so long that he has decided that there is no outside world. He has seen service with our flag all over the world, but he is not acquainted with anybody in Dixie.

Sergt. Croxton has not received a letter in 13 months.

The Commercial Appeal would be glad if some one would write to Sergt. Croxton and send him a Christmas souvenir.

Think what it means for a man not to receive a single letter for 13 months!

We know that Sergt. Croxton is a good soldier. We are sure that he will do his duty over here or over there.

Mrs. J.—“Now suppose you get even with Fate by writing Sergt. Croxton a letter.”

Miss Ess—“I’ll tell you what I’ll do—I’ll just give *Sergt. Bee* a dose instead!”

And such was the beginning of this book.

T———, Tennessee.

Dec. 23, 1917.

Dear Sergt. Bee O. Bee:

Your communication in the Commercial Appeal in behalf of your friend, Croxton, was indeed most pathetic. It brought tears to my eyes, sorrow to my heart, expostulations to my lips, and a shock to my delicate nervous system to think of dear, desolate, dreary, disconsolate, doleful, dejected, deserted Croxton wand'ring 'round for thirteen long months humming in the minor key, "The Letter That I Longed for Never Came."

Poor fellow!—please extend to him my deepest sympathy. Tell him that the greatest disappointment of my life is that I'm a complete failure in the capacity of letter writing, else I should be pleased to send him one every day for the next thirteen months. Bless his dear little soldier heart!—I hope some one will be merciful enough to send him at least a Xmas card. I would do so myself but am also a failure when it comes to selecting appropriate Xmas cards. But there's one capacity in which I'm a howling success, and that is in the selection of uplifting literature for my fellow-beings as they wearily wander through this wicked world. Therefore, in lieu of a letter, I'm sending him one of the classics, "That Pup," which I hope he will enjoy to the fullest extent of his intellectual ability.

It was awfully nice of you to come to your friend's rescue and to lend him a helping hand in the hour of need. Such consideration for the unfortunate will doubtless put some twinklers in the crown which I hope you are to receive by and by.

If there are others of your acquaintance who are short on the letter-receiving proposition please send me their names and I'll remember them in my prayers.

With many thoughts of poor Croxton,

I am truly,

(Miss) Vee Dee Ess.

Camp Beauregard, La.

December the last,

Nineteen hundred and—WAR DECLARED!

My (?) Dear Miss Ess:

Your very auto-biographical letter just received. I appreciate your heartfelt, courageous, spirit-consoling, let-'er-slip type of ever ready "Peace on earth, good will toward men" view of the matter! It was very thoughtful of you to hand me the bouquet in the form of a lemon shrub instead of mailing poor Crox a Xmas card.

Yes, Sergt. Croxton is a real dyed-in-the-wool friend of "yours truly," and being sadly in the mire of solitude and desolation, I deemed it my diaconal duty to dispatch a declaration of distress to the different domestic domiciles of Dixie in order that he, Sergt. Croxton, should receive letters, post cards, parcels and packages just as other men did. But as a matter of fact when I deliver to him your message and perhaps allow him to read your soul-inspiring letter, he will doubtless be greatly rejoiced that *you* kindly refrained from jotting him a line of remembrance or a single card of Xmas greeting. However it is possible that he will not judge too harshly when I remind him that you are a dead failure with the sole exception of being approximately a success at

selecting uplifting literature for illiterate humanity and supply sergeants. By the way, I'd like to inquire whether you have read Homer, Cicero, or Young Wild West.

Well, my dear self-appointed friend, I must close the chin music and git bizzy.

I am yours "till Niagara Falls,"

Sergt. Bee O. Bee.

January 8, 1918.

Dear Sergt. Bee:

If what I handed you was a lemon *shrub* then I must say that you have handsomely repaid me by sending in return the *full grown bush*, heavily laden! Yes, I discovered lemons galore, not only in the lines themselves, but also snugly nestled between the lines; therefore as my former letter seems to have incurred your displeasure I suppose an explanation, also an apology, is in order—so here goes:

When I read your note in the paper I imagined it was simply a joke that you were playing on your friend. I pictured Croxton as a jovial, good-natured fellow who received about *thirteen letters each day* and that you, his pal, resorted to that method of guying him about it and of increasing his daily supply of letters to an unlimited number. Upon my word that is the exact construction I placed upon what you wrote to the paper. So I thought that, just for fun, I'd send a reply. However it is very evident that you failed to accept that reply in the spirit in which it was intended, which is not at all surprising if you were really in earnest about your statements concerning your friend. And in that very same spirit of fun I mailed him the crazy little book, "That Pup." Wonder did he get it!

Well, so much by way of explanation. Now I suppose the next thing on the program is the apology. And by the way, apologizing is my long suit. Nothing on earth gives me more pleasure than to beg people's pardon! In fact, I've spent half my life

doing mean things in order that I might spend the other half apologizing for them. And tonight finds me just in the humor to contrive a particularly pathetic one, therefore I submit the following which I hope will meet with your approbation:



With tearful eyes, on bended knees,
I seek thine anger to appease;
For what I wrote the other day
You'll please forgive me, won't you?—*Say!*

Vee Dee Ess.

Camp Beauregard, Jan. 15th.

My dear Miss Vee Dee:

'Tis with a convalescing pen and a trembling right forefoot that I try to communicate with you this evening,—in other words I'm slinging a feeble quill. Now if I really handed you so much tropical fruit of the sour variety please forgive me, for I am only a poor sergeant soldiering for Old Glory and am not supposed to be a poet or a dramatist.

Now, Miss V. D., lets you and I arbitrate. You sit down here on this—no, wait a moment and I'll rush over and borrow a camp stool from the Lieutenant. Ah, here we are! You will please excuse my surroundings, for camp life is not like our drawing-room at home. Now I have punched up the fire and am ready to begin. First, I stand before you, taking the position of our hero of a century past, Nap Bonaparte—my arms folded over my chest, a troubled look in my eyes. I kick my canteen and register "Worry."

Now I run in the elocution:—My Dear Vee Dee, 'tis the rarest of my happy moments to be with you this evening. I have come to you—or you have come to me, which?—to clear up the Croxton case. Sergt. Croxton is my friend and bunkie. I met him two years ago in South America. He was in the Marines and I with the Engineers. My time was out and I

went home—to Memphis—where I could find a pretty girl, see a snow, and get cussed by a policeman. At last I broke off diplomatic relations with the Kraut Eaters and enlisted in the Infantry. Here I finds my old pal, Crox, who really had received neither a letter nor a card for thirteen months.

Now dear Vee Dee, lets you and I k—, I mean shake hands and make up. I'll admit that I'm a plebeian, but the General has selected me for the Officers' Training School at San Antonio. I hope you will find it convenient to let me hear from you before I leave Camp Beauregard.

Honest Injun, your letters appeal to me, for they are the right brand to cheer a fellow up, bubbling over with high-class humor. I'll promise not to hand you another lemon as long as you do me the honor of writing to me.

With best regards, I am yours till they move the equator to Greenland.

Bee O. Bee.—or *Bob*.

P. S. Woman, thou art forgiven!

At Home, Jan. 23rd.

So we'll bury the little hatchet and smoke the Pipe o' Peace! Yes, I'm tickled to death that we're on speaking terms again and that you have decided not to treat me like a stepchild any more, 'cause I don't like to be knocked at and sat down upon and treated like I didn't have any heart at all, at all! Now if you ever mail me any more lemons I'm going to pray that the bad-man will get you. My prayers, by the way, have great influence. So now! Be good!

Well, I greatly enjoyed that little visit to you in your tent, and since we have succeeded in satisfactorily disposing of the Croxton case, I shall now have you spend a whole hour with me in my humble quarters in snowbound Tennessee,—“Sunny” has become a misnomer, for the sun has ceased to show his face around here any more.

At 8:30 P. M. you enter the room. Quaking with fear and trembling, I behold a veritable Napoleon of old! My heart stands still, but my woman's tongue comes to its rescue and I venture to exclaim with affected bravery:—“Now look here, Mr. Bee O. Bee, you will please hasten to lay aside that *Napoleonic* expression and that *Bonaparte* tone of voice, else I'll express you to a far-away body of land surrounded by water and there let you die all by your lonesome; for we're not going to have our evening spoiled with those superior, shockingly non-sentimental, soldierly

airs. Just take this good old-fashioned chair and this box o' cigars—'cause you'd better smoke here than hereafter—and sit down in this good old-fashioned way, forgetting that there ever were any soldiers, or wars, or enemies to lick."

Then while you smoke I'll talk about—lots of things!

Directly the cigar has fallen,—and thou, too, hast fallen—*fast asleep!* Good-night, Bobbie—sweet dreams!

Your friend,

Dee.

4th Inf. Co. O. T. C.

Camp Stanley, Texas.

Feb. 5th, '18.

My dear Friend:

I wrote you from Houston, Texas, giving you my future address but have not heard from you. Probably you have decided to break off diplomatic relations with me, however I am going to write you a few lines this P. M.

They sure are working me some. But I can't worry over that as I am a hard worker to begin with. I am not in the least afraid of work; in fact, I can lay me down right by the side of work and go to sleep. I am about as industrious as the proverbial sluggard that was recommended to visit the proverbial ant. Now we take it for granted that I am the before-mentioned sluggard and you are unit of industry, the ant. Naturally if I visit the scenes of industry, I, the sluggish sluggard, will slug around at about the noon hour. Of course it will not be on a wheatless, meatless, sweetless, or eatless day. You will observe me with my belt hooked up to the last notch, my eyes sunken and dark around the lids, my face registering "Hunger" in great volume,—verily a fit subject for the Muses, for you accost me with the jingle which the fairies pull off in the 2nd act:

“Your cap is on crookit,
Your shoe is unhookit,
You may not be drunk
But be-jabbers you lookit.”

So you usher the said sluggard in and announce that you will donate a large healthy sandwich if he will doll himself up to such an extent that the dog deems him clean enough to bark at. Then he tells you that he is the battle-scarred veteran of many campaigns who used to write you from Camp Beauregard,—a sergeant who drew a monthly conditional stipend of \$38!

But fighting has gone out of fashion; my trade is banished; no more do I pause with satisfied smile to wipe the blood from my bayonet. My dear, I am giving you an illustration of myself in 1925 A. D.

But as I started out to say, I am working hard now, so when I call 'round after wars are out of date you can have a little sympathy for me and say, "Well, the boob worked at Camp Stanley, Texas!"

I am expecting to get a furlough about the middle of April and shall visit sister in dear old Memphis town.

Well, I must close for I hear "Soupy."

Yours &c.,

Bob.

At Home, Feb. 14th.

Well, good morning, Mr. Rip Van Winkle,—hope you enjoyed your nap! I'd just begun to wonder whether you'd entered the land o' dreamless sleep; but am glad that, like Marse Rip, you decided to rouse up after so long a time, get your paper, pen and ink together and send me an account of yourself since you left Camp Beauregard. Then, too, I've been hearing that pneumonia was causing a high death-rate among the soldiers at San Antonio,—three hundred during the month of January. It made me wonder if, among that number, Mr. Death had had the audacity to step in and put a quietus on *your* heart! However I'm glad he is permitting you to 'bide a wee longer here, 'cause I think we need slug-gards (?) like you to help bring "Peace on earth good will toward men." But if you should have to go before that day of peace arrives be sure to let me know, and I'll bring the sweetest flower that the forest affords and reverently lay it upon the grave of one who fought for the Stars and Stripes. Gee, that "forest flower" stuff reads like Longfellow, doesn't it? And the entire sentence reads like it's a cinch that you're going to beat me to that other world, when who knows but that I'll get there and tired o' waiting long before you put in your appearance! But if I should be half a century ahead of you, don't think that I've forgotten you, for when you look at the

stars I shall be peeping at you through the very brightest one in the heavens and shall be

Winking at you
And blinking at you,
And bidding you hurry
And come on too.

At this juncture I want to extend the right hand of Christian fellowship to those who are working you to a frazzle at Camp Stanley! Now, to make a short story long, *that* reads like (the) Dickens, doesn't it?—so I'll meliorate the remark by explaining that I'm possessed with the jim-jams this morning, and like Bobbie Burns, I feel like writing a "zig-zag, helter-skelter, ram-stam, pell-mell, mile-long letter, just as if some spirit from the nether world were looking over my shoulder, smiling complacently, and bidding me give vent to the effusions, the rattle-headed effusions of reckless spirits just as they flow, fresh from the spring."

Do I have these attacks often? Oh no; only a peculiar hereditary idiosyncrasy, and I'm perfectly harmless when under its influence. You see I'm minus a night's sleep—was up with a sick child last night—but am planning to take a nap at the close of this edifying epistle.

I'm glad you like San Antonio,—but the question that confronts me now is what title I shall give you since you changed camps. Are you still *Sergt.* Bee, or are you Somebody Else? Come to think of it,

you may be a Married Man for all I know. How about it? If you are, then I want to put a quietus on our foolishness; for of course I don't want to be encroaching upon another woman's territory.

Now really when I sent you my first letter I had no intention that a regular correspondence should ensue—just thought I'd let you know I caught on to your joke on your friend, Crox. You were not soliciting a correspondent for yourself at all, so of course the fault is all my own and for all I know my letters may be an imposition upon good nature. But if you're really not married and are free to write to whomsoever you please then I'll be glad to hear from you whensoever you care to write, for I think you write awfully cute letters even if you do snow-ball me with a lemon now and then.

Now I'll say good-bye. Whoever you are, "may the Father of mercies watch o'er you and every good thing attend you," is the sincere wish of your friend,

Vee Dee Ess.

Camp Stanley, Texas.

Feb. 20th.

My dear Miss Vee Dee:

Let's you and I arbitrate a little more. Now I have always been a happy-go-lucky fellow that loved the whole world; never had any trouble making friends; could even smile on the 1st of the month when the bills came due. And you, fair woman, come along and ask if I am *married*! But of course you can't tell what brand of smile a fellow wears by reading (or would *decipher* be a better word?) his letters. No, Vee Dee, I am *not* married—just a wand'ring wreck from a correspondence tech, a heck of an engineer. That is, before I awoke one morning in a patriotic mood and found myself a few hours later with one hand and one eye pointing toward heaven, slowly repeating after an army office words to this effect: "I, Bee O. Bee, do solemnly swear (or affirm) to bear true faith and allegiance"—etc.—"so help me God." Since then I have been a soldier,—not a soldier of Fortune, but a soldier of the U. S. A. and partly under the diligent care of *Miss-fortune*; that is, *Miss-fortune* does the directing and commanding of my personal affairs, such as love-making, corresponding, running guard lines, and passing inspection on Saturday morning. However it seems that I have succeeded in pulling one over her, for I am glad you think of my letters as you do. I enjoy your letters

very much, for they help to cheer me up and make every inch of a smile stagger out. I hope we may continue to be good friends.

Now this is the plan that I would suggest. I will be "Big Brother" who is only a volunteer in the army—it's a family secret, but he's a failure. You be "Big Sis," and I'll try to change around till you will not be so badly disappointed in your Big Brother. That's the way I would like to look at it. How does the idea suit Miss Vee Dee?

You see if I should sit down here and swear by the shades of Julius A. Caesar that I loved you dearer than fruit cake, and that if you refused to accept my bleeding heart I would stagger into a drug store and order a carbolic acid cocktail (which would be the last of the game except the new dress the undertaker's daughter would get) you would know it was a lie, and so would I.

But don't get it into your head that I am not capable of loving, for when it comes to falling in love I am one of the grand old masters—Mark Antony and Romeo look like *woman haters* in comparison with Sergt. Bee O. Bee.

I am thinking it possible that I will get a furlough about the 20th of April. I have got to rush over to Memphis to kiss Sister—eighteen months since I have kissed the girl that really loves me and is true to me. Now tell this wand'ring Arab how far you are from Memphis.

Just to find whether you have the nerve to write me after seeing how a real good landscape can be spoiled, I am inclosing a kodak picture of myself taken when I was on guard. Now don't cast it from thee just because the god of Beauty was taking a week-end in the country when I was turned out. But of course we both couldn't be real handsome, so I will leave the beauty to you and the war maneuvers I will run myself.

We have some peaceful hours at the Y. M. C. A. It is just as nice and quiet as a boiler factory. A plumber (?) is playing "Over There" on the piano, and, between you and me, if I ever get *him* over there I'm going to stick my bayonet through him. You ask if I don't like music. Sure I do, but who said anything about music?

Well, I musn't take all your time—ten pages now and nothing said.

Yours till I play Yankee Doodle on the Kaiser's piano and then awhile.

Bob.

T——, Feb. 26th.

“Life is a game we play,
And sometimes the luck may be bitter;
We in the game must stay,
Nothing is worse than a quitter.”

No, I haven't the remotest intention of retiring from the game because of the fact that you're not going to write to me in a

“In life's delight, in death's dismay,
In health and sickness and decay;
In storm and sunshine, night and day,
Here and hereafter I am thine” tone of voice!

Indeed the “Big Brother” and “Big Sis” idea suits me to a fare-ye-well,—'cause you know a big sis has divers privileges with her big brother. For instance, when the world goes all wrong and I feel like pouncing on you with all the blame and calling you a good-for-nothing stand-up-in-the-corner, you can't do a thing but smile and say, “That's Big Sis and she has a perfect right to unload her heart upon me!” Then, on the other hand, if I should happen to catch myself in a combination poetic and sentimental mood and should spring something like the following on you:

“Big Sis is tuff, her ways are ruff,
But her heart is on the level;
If you get blue I'll pray for you,

'Cause I love you like the d——,” you couldn't afford to think it other than a sister's love for her kid brother. Really I think that a fine and dandy plan,

for I'll now feel free to "pour my thoughts all right out upon you, just as they are, chaff and grain together; certain that a faithful brother's hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and with the breath of kindness blow the rest away."

Was awfully glad to get your little picture. But I take issue with you in your statement about the god of Beauty having forgotten you, for Big Sis has no kick coming about your looks,—in fact, I think Apollo handed you a right liberal share of his dope. And gee, I'll bet old man Mars is just crazy to get you into the scrap "Over There," 'cause you look like one who could do some good work in his line. How much do you weigh? And you didn't tell me your age, so I'm going to guess you about twenty-five.

Now since you were so nice as to send me your own likeness, I'll be so kind as to mail you one of mine in a day or two. It flatters me greatly, but I wouldn't dare accept one that didn't!

Yes, I know you'll be glad to get home in April—and Kid, I'll be glad for you! But you'd better wait till you get my picture before you decide definitely whether you want to know how far I live from Memphis.

Say, I have a book that I know you would enjoy,—that is, if you haven't read it. However I imagine you're a guy who has read everything from "Peck's Bad Boy" to "Pilgrim's Progress." Your mind seems to be a sort of knowledge junk shop wherein you can find almost anything you want. Anyhow I want to

know whether you've read "A House-Boat on the Styx." If not, then I want to send it to you.

Well, I must stop my foolishness, say my prayers and turn in. Guess, among other things, I'll have to ask forgiveness for the idle words I've written you tonight. Now do you know I often wonder whether the Bible really means what it says about folks having to give an account of their idle words. If so, then where will you and I land?

Goodnight; write again soon to

Big Sis.

March 1st, 1918.

Dear Big Sis:

Here I am again tonight in good spirits—in love with the whole world. My rifle and bayonet are clean and I've got my lessons so I can explain things according to Hoyle, therefore I have a cigarette protruding from a satisfied smile, believing very strongly in the old adverb,

“Laugh and the world laugh with you,
Snore and you sleep alone.”

Yes, I find myself spectator of a little drama; for miraculous fairy Pen is dipping brilliant ideas from the depths of Carter's Blue-Black and scattering them over the white sheets—all for *you*. Why do I want to persecute you in such manner? Well, you see that in my writings to father I have to give him my views on war conditions. Then I have to talk furloughs to sister. My friends back at Camp Beauregard have me explaining the latest styles in trench warfare. And when I write to my Queen of Hearts I have to recite poetry and tell her why I think Kipling excels Shakespeare. You are the only one that I can write to just as my heart dictates.

BUT—the information that I am seeking now is why I have *got* to see your picture before I can git the magnetic meridian, vertical interval, map distance, geographical location, and direction of T—when orientation is taken at Memphis, the same state and territory. What connection has your picture

with my study of geographical area and three cts. per mile R. R. fare?—huh?

Now Miss Vee Dee, dear Big Sis, kind Friend, Senorita, Signorina, Fraulein, and dear Mademoiselle, will you please be so kind and condescending as to stoop without bending and bring this argument to an ending by furnishing me with information leading to the discovery of direction and distance you are from Memphis?

I am going to be tickled to death to get your picture for I'm crazy over your letters.

Speaking of the prune market in South Africa reminds me of the check marks that Father Time has placed opposite my name and labeled "Events," which have now reached approximately the total of seven,—viz,

Event No. 1—I was born (are you startled at the revelation?) twenty-four years ago, it was.

" No. 2—I sailed for South America. (No, the sheriff did not pursue me.)

" No. 3—I stepped on a banana peel in Chicago.

" No. 4—I became a soldier—that is, camouflaged as one.

" No. 5.—I meet my old tropical friend, Crox—his face is sunburned but his heart is not.

" No. 6—I stole a kiss—but honest, I tried to give it back.

" No. 7—I received a letter from *you*.

Now of course you can readily understand that Event No. 3 made the most lasting impression upon me. But somehow I always was unlucky. I was born under that ill omen planet, Saturn. "A hint to the wise is sufficient"—I'm trying to borrow a quarter; also looking for sympathy, as every "s" is torn out of my dictionary.

By the way, I shall be glad to read your "House-Boat on the Styx."

May the goddess that has you in charge look over you.

Yours till Fritz throws fits,

Bob.

March 4, 1918.

Dear Bob:

Your brilliant ideas received. Yes, just write whenever and whatever your heart dictates and Big Sis will understand.

Now, as far as you and I are concerned, Kipling and Shakespeare can go to—Alaska; for we are lucky enough to stand in with the Muses. If we want to read good poetry we don't have to go to Kipling or anybody else,—we can just make up our own verses and let Kipling and his gang rest.

And Billy Shakespeare! Gee, who'd give a rap to read his dope when they have a few of your letters on hand! By the way, I'm keeping all of them. *What for?* Perhaps I'll need a tonic when I'm feeble and old and gray.

Am mailing you photograph under separate cover. Bye bye.

Big Sis.



Do you still want to know how far I live from
Memphis?

March 7, 1918.

As I gaze upon your photograph my soul drifts
away into the fields of red clover; therefore

“I’m dreaming of you tonight, dear Kate,
With your hair so silky and black;
I’ve wondered, dear Kate, since I left you
If you’d ever welcome me back.

“To the time when life was gay, dear Kate,
My heart goes stealing back,
Before I polished a bayonet
Or ever I shouldered a pack.

“It may be a long, long time, dear Kate,
Before I whisper your name;
For I am rolling the dice, dear Kate,
And Fate is banking the game.

“I’m coming right home to you, dear Kate,
As soon as I stake my claim
Out in the middle of No-Man’s-Land,
Or as soon as we give it a name.

"I long to look into your liquid eyes,
Eyes like the Devon Springs,
Eyes that set my brain in a whirl
And make me dream of things.

"When all this war is over, Dear Kate,
When all the strife is done,
I'll have to come back and plow you, Kate—
You long-eared sun-of-a-gun!"

HOW FAR DO YOU LIVE FROM MEMPHIS?

Bob.

March 10th.

$3\frac{1}{2}$ kicks from "Dear Kate" plus 1 flop of her ears equal $\frac{1}{2}$ the distance I live from Memphis. You can readily compute the entire distance if you'll

Let x equal the distance of 1 kick.

" y " " " " 1 flop.

Big Sis.

4th Inf. Co., O. T. C.

Camp Stanley, Texas.

Mar. 10th.

Dear Vee Dee:

It is Sunday and I feel like the last few hours of a misspent life. Do you know what kind of a feeling that is? *No?* Well, if you wish to be enlightened, the most satisfactory rule I have found is something like the following:

The high cost of living — present funds + war bonds, undertaker's bills, together with your lovely photo ÷ miles per hour of a consumptive snail, × the desire to live = RESULT.

BUT THAT PHOTOGRAPH! Ah, Woman, your enticing beauty, signs of spring, and the Texas sky are too-oo-oo much! Angels of heaven, it has made my heart nothing less than a gushing fountain of love! I gaze upon that wonderful face with a heart supreme. Those lovely lips!—Holy Virgin, Mother Mary!—is it possible for such lips to belong to a living creature? Not so,—they are the lips of an angel. They recall to my mind a spasm of Bobbie Burns:

“Turn away those rosy lips
Fill'd with balmy treasure,
Turn away thine eyes of love
Lest I die with pleasure.”

Also Mark Antony's spiel to Cleopatra:-

“As for thee, star-eyed Egyptian!
Glorious sorceress of the Nile!
Light the path to Stygian horrors
With the splendors of thy grin.”

My star-eyed Sis! Ah, fluttering heart, sit still! I speak only five languages and yet I find myself speechless when attempting to describe optics such as yours. The only eyes I can compare them with are those of a sea-sick crocodile.

Yes, my soul is now the soul of a poet and a lover;
for

The bees are singing,

The flowers are humming,

And the birds are making honey.

I hope you will not be offended, but I got me a map and looked up T——, so you need not bother about telling me where it is. I should like to have a letter from you before I leave here, but will raise anchor tomorrow, therefore my future address will be the old one, Co. E, 153rd Inf. Camp Beauregard, La. I sure am glad to be going back. I mailed you a post card folder of San Antonio this A. M. .

You blast all my hopes by guessing me to be twenty-five years old when I am only twenty-four and three quarters, though no one believes it except the family Bible for I am judged to be about twenty. I weigh 167 lbs., have brown eyes, brown hair, dark complexion, and wear a number—no, wait a minute!

—I started to give the size of my shoe but will wait till you write me two or three more letters for I enjoy your letters very much.

Well, Big Sis of the beautiful picture, I will now bid you goodnight.

Yours till I'm elected President,

Bob.

Mar. 14th.

Dear Bob:

Your letter of the 10th just received. Was glad to hear again but sorry you had to resort to your geography in order to ascertain the location of T——, for I wanted to tell you about it myself.

I'm delighted that you're so well pleased with my photo; however you must bear in mind that it was made many years ago when I was in the bloom of young womanhood, but if you were aware of how many milestones I've passed on the journey of life since then, you *might not* be so extravagant in your declarations of undying love and devotion,—'cause honey, I'm old enough to be yo' grandma!—for

With locks of red
And eyes of green
I'm just approaching
"Sweet six"—*ty five*.

Now ain't you sorry you chewed the rag so hard about the location of T——? But it seems that you and I just naturally must chew the rag about something, for we no sooner succeeded in settling the Croxton case than we became confronted with this T—— and Memphis question for consideration. However, with the assistance of your geography, together with the problem I sent you for solution, I trust that we shall be able to call a truce the second time and "pass the bottle round."

But, by the way, I must tell you how your "Dear Kate" poem made me sin,—for that night while I was saying my prayers I happened to think of that *un-godly last line*, and I bust out laughing right then and there! Now see what you made me do! I asked God to forgive me though, and also asked Him not to forget to bless my dear little Big Brother.

I am with a patient so will have to bid you good-night for this time. Remember me in your "Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep." And remember to write again soon to

Big Sis.

Lafayette, La., Mar. 13th.

Sis:

Hung up here for twenty-four hours. Believe I'll
tear up the town. Bob.

To Captain of Co. E, 153rd Infantry.

Camp Beauregard, La.

LOST—STRAYED—or STOLEN.

A young Sergeant by the name of Bee O. Bee—24 years old; brown eyes; brown hair; weight 167 lbs.; a “jack-at-all-trades,” but especially excelling as a poet and a heart smasher. By the way, the little rascal has disappeared, not only with my latest photograph but also with my heart, and I’m anxious to have them refunded.

When last heard from, which was almost a week ago, he was en route from Camp Stanley, Texas, to Camp Beauregard.

Liberal reward offered for any information leading to the whereabouts of said Bee.

I inclose stamped envelope for reply,

Truly,

Box 257.

T——, Tennessee.

March 19, 1918.

Camp Beauregard, La.

March 23, 1918.

From:—Commanding Officer, Co. E, 153rd Infantry.

To:—Box 257, T——, Tennessee.

Subject—Whereabouts of Sergeant Bee. O. Bee.

1. Sergeant Bee O. Bee reported to this company for duty from Camp Stanley in a military manner and was distressingly sober at the time of his arrival, which action on his part can hardly be explained, because it is well known that he had to pass through the city of Lafayette, La., which city does not vote the prohibition ticket.

2. Since his arrival Sergt. Bee has demonstrated the fact, hitherto unknown, that a poet and a heart breaker can also be an excellent soldier—if he so desires.

3. Full steps will be taken to recover your picture, but am sorry to state that I am at a loss as to the action necessary to restore your heart, as this is a matter which is entirely beyond the scope of military authorities.

4. Will turn this communication over to Sergt. Bee and let him settle his family quarrels.

Commanding Officer, Co. E.

per 1st Sergeant.

per Company Clerk.

per Head K. P.

B/H

T——, Tenn., Mar. 30th.

Dear Mr. Commanding Officer:

I'm sending you under separate cover the liberal reward which you so richly deserve for your kindness in furnishing me valuable information concerning that wandering Arab, Bee—information not only as to his whereabouts but also as to some of his discarded bad habits, for really I'm surprised at his showing up sober, considering that he and Bacchus have always been on the most intimate terms! Perhaps the good advice I've been giving him for lo these many days is responsible for the change. Oh the good we all may do while the war is rolling on!

Now, Mr. Captain, if you'll promise to camp on his trail and assist me in making a man of him, I'll send you by return post Liberal Reward No. 2.

But a few words concerning Reward No. 1. Of course upon receipt of your information, the first thought that entered my mind was, "What gift shall I offer that could in any measure express my appreciation of such kindness?" My mind first hit on one half-dozen boxes of cigars. But no sooner had the thought struck me than I realized that Commanding Officers did not smoke—at least not in this world—therefore I dared not offend your dignity with such an offering.

Thought No. 2—Realizing from the tone of your communication that you're an intellectual bug,—a

man to whom good literature would appeal in the superlative degree, I decided that nothing could be more acceptable to one whose intellectuality is so far above par, than the book "That Pup"—one of my favorites—which I'm mailing you, with the injunction that you refrain from being selfish with it; but after you have read it several times yourself just pass the good work on, thereby doing your bit in assisting to elevate your fellowman.

Now let me again thank you for your kindness,—and that you may never fall into the hands of the Germans, nor any other Bad-Man, is the sincere wish of

Box 257.

Camp Beauregard, La.

3-22-'18.

My dear Big Sis:

When I report for duty at Camp Beauregard I eagerly salute your letter of the 14th, also your card of the 10th. You win on the rule for computing the distance between the two burgs in sunny Tennessee.

Now your lovely photograph did not worry me in the least, for since I received your first letter I have been laboring under the correct impression,—as one could readily judge from the tone of your communications that you were a young girl when Manhattan Island was a canebrake.

We have just stood our over-sea examinations, which means that something will probably happen soon. I passed perfect on everything except my feet—my arches are somewhat “down in the mouth” but they won’t be likely to cull me on that account. I want to get “Over There” in time for the round-up anyway.

I don’t know whether I’ve told you or not, but I’m a specialist on the heavy guns. The Major asked me today if I could explain the secret of the great German gun. Now of course I know everything, so I told him that they placed their gun on the east of Paris, shot the shell westward to a high altitude and

merely let the world rush around under the shell.
Now that's reasonable, don't you think?

Taps has caught me, so the lights must go out.

Lovingly,

Bob.

At Home, Mar. 29th.

Dear Big Brother:

I was glad to hear from you again for was beginning to wonder whether you had decided to "fold your tent like the Arabs and as silently steal away," therefore I sent a tracer after you. Am glad you're back at your old post for I don't believe you were crazy about Camp Stanley.

Well, what are you doing these days?—everybody you can? What are you chewing?—the rag? Also what are you smoking?—not cigarettes, to be sure! And while I'm in an interrogating mood I'll also inquire what has become of your friend, Croxton. Please tell him I'll appreciate it muchly if he'll write me a nice little note of thanks for the pup that I sent him. Of course he's crazy about it and I think it nothing but right and proper that he should tell me how lovely it was of me to remember him with such a valuable offering.

No, honey, you're very much mistaken about my winning the game in reply to your poem, for I think that poem capped the climax, and I'm ready to confess that

"Tho' I've belted you and flayed you,
By the living Gawd that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din."

(with apologies to Kipling, after having promised to let him rest.)

Say, Bob, I have for some time been intending to ask your sister's name and address, 'cause if you should go "Over There" and should be too busy to write to me perhaps I might hear from you through her—for I want to keep in touch with my little Big Brother. I suppose your mother is not living as you have not spoken of her in any of your letters.

Now, Bob, I must prepare to bring this to a close, though I'd be glad to sit here and cover the length and breadth of a dozen pages. But I'm with another patient this time and I find it rather difficult to collect my thoughts for a letter while I'm in the sick-room. If I don't mind I'll have you imagining I'm a nurse, won't I? But you mustn't get anything like that into your head.

Am mailing you a little box of candy. Bye bye; write when you can for your letters are always welcome.

Big Sis.

April 2nd.

Sweet Big Sis:

You sure are the dearest sis, 'cept one, in all the world even if you do play some awfully naughty pranks on your big brother.

Yes, the Captain turned over your "Lost, Strayed, or Stolen" communication to me to answer. I was in charge of quarters that day and feeling quite military. And just a few minutes ago he called me over and handed me your letter of March 30th. But he says if his wife finds out where That Pup came from there sure will be a riot on hand.

I received your nice box of candy, also your "House-Boat on the Styx." I want to thank you but hardly know how to go about it. You certainly are some sis. I'm going to fool around yet and tell you that I love you and mean every word of it.

Your "House-Boat" is fine and dandy and I enjoyed it very much. But for the mind that is not fairly familiar with history from Rameses down to P. T. Barnum I imagine it is very dry reading.

Now when you take a notion to quote from Kipling don't offer him any apologies unless you wish to beg his pardon for substituting me for his good old water-boy, Gunga Din, instead of calling me *Danny Deeever*. But pray tell me what *you* are,—for you have led me to believe that you were a nurse, and now you tell me to divest my mind of the idea. I

can't exactly get you placed. Now fess up and tell me.

My sister, Mrs. X. Y. Z., lives at ——St., Memphis. But if I do cross the Big Drink I'm not going to get too all-fired busy to write to you—for how do you expect me to whip Germany without your letters!

Well, Dee, I must now bid you adieu.

Yours till Heinz runs out of pickles,

Bob.



Farewell, cruel World, Big Sis won't write!
"Death, where is thy sting?"

April 13th.

Dear Bob:

I didn't intend waiting so long to write you but have been very busy with a very, very sick patient, however I'll try to get in a few pages tonight.

Guess I'll begin by expatiating on the letters and pup I sent the Captain. Of course I didn't know there was a *Mrs.* Captain, but even if I had I don't see that there would have been any harm in having written what I did, as it was all in fun. Hope his "better half" won't run across That Pup for I don't want to cause trouble in the camp.

And so you think there's a bare probability of your saying to me, "I love you!" Why, honey, of course you love me! *Who said you didn't?* That's a dead-easy proposition that can be demonstrated by a combination algebra and geometry method. Here it is:

Prove that Bob loves Dee.

1. Big Brothers always love their Big Sisters.
 2. You're my Big Brother and I'm your Big Sis.
 3. Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other. (Axiom 1.)
- \therefore you love me.

Q. E. D.

And by vice "versa-ing" the process, it can be just as readily demonstrated that *I love you*. So you see there's no use in our chewing the rag over self-evi-

dent propositions; for of course by all the laws, both of nature and of mathematics, we couldn't possibly help loving one another even if we so desired. So now!

And you want to know what I am! Well, honey, I've always wanted to tell you, and yet have hesitated for fear that you might howl on my profession; — for I'm a — a — fortune teller! Want me to give you some pointers on yourself?

Be a good boy and write again soon to

Big Sis.

April 16th.

Dear Chinese Puzzle:

At last I have a few minutes to run off just as my heart dictates.

I hope my little Fortune Teller is in ship-shape. As for me, aside from a good dose of the north pole product (cold), I am ready to go to the mat with anything from the Old Man with the sickle, long whiskers and hour glass down to listening to a reading from Mark Twain.

Big Sis, please don't despise me but really I have misplaced your picture. Can't you afford to send me a tiny one instead of such a long drawn out one as the other?—for we should do our bit by cutting down the size of our photographs as well as the size of our shoes. Another thing that I think should be reduced in volume is a dose of salts. And I'm almost certain that at least 101% of the soldiers would favor the reduction of drill hours. But the minute you start cutting down my share of your letters I am going to advertise Mr. Hoover in every newspaper as a fraudulent quack, German spy, and a national enemy.

Speaking of fortunes, I, Sergt. Bee of the U. S. Army, being of full age, sound body, but matrimonial mind and memory, do hereby make, ordain, publish and declare (consequences be blowed) this to be my last will and testament:

First—I direct that all my just debts be paid after I am dead (only).

Second—I do hereby give, devise and bequeath to Big Sis one victrola to give to a patient or throw in the creek or let the cook build a fire with its music-infected sides, as this bloomin' machine can't sit up here in the writing room and continue this "Over There" and "Long, Long Trail" stuff and at the same time me do my real duty as your Romeo with pen and ink.

Third—I do hereby nominate, constitute and appoint without bond, one Big Sis as sole executor of this my last will and testament. I hereby revoke all other agreements, dates, or matrimonial contracts by me made excepting my oath of enlistment into the U. S. Army.

Signed this 16th day of April A. D. 1918.

Sergt. Bob.
U. S. Army.

Witnesses

General Prisoner,
U. S. Army.

General Delivery,
U. S. Post Office.

I, Big Sis, do make and publish this my will and testament hereby revoking all former wills and codicils by me at any time made.

First—It is my will that as soon after my death as practical all my just debts, including funeral expenses, be paid by—WHOSOEVER WILL.

Second—After the payment of all just debts and obligations and funeral expenses,

“I leave the sunshine to the flowers,
I leave the springtime to the trees
And to the old folks memories
Of a baby on their knees.

I leave the night-time to the dreamer,
I leave the song-bird to the blind;
And the moon above to those in love
When I leave the world behind.”

Third—And to my dear little Big Brother I leave not one, but each of the above-mentioned beautiful things of nature,—the singing birds, the sun-kissed flowers, the forest trees, the dewdrops that glisten at break of day and the “forget-me-nots of the angels” that blossom at night—the hills, the valleys, and the calm, strong mountains.

“I leave you the power that nothing can
o’erthrow,—
The power to smile and laugh the while
A-journeying through life you go.”

And when you shall grow weary of the journey, and lying down by the wayside fall into that dreamless sleep, I leave a prayer that on your forehead shall fall the golden dawning of the grander day,—and that, awakening with His likeness, you shall be satisfied.

This the 19th day of April, 1918.

Big Sis.

Witnesses—God and His angels.

Camp Beauregard, La.

4/22/'18.

What in the dickens is the matter with you, Sis?—for that mixture, the Arthur Percival Will, the song “When I Leave the World Behind,” together with your poetic prose, is too much!

Big Sis, why not leave me the days when I used to play hookey, the old lake where I used to swim and fish, and the picturesque spot where I learned my first stroke? Leave me the joy of watching the dragon flies that skim the waters and the lilies that grow on the bosom of the lake.

Memories!—do they ever play the mischief with your constitution?

But, Big Sis, you needn't be making your will to me for I'm not going to let you die first, because I need your letters too badly. They help to keep my spirits up. Yes, you are a wonderful sis, and I do love you. In fact, I've been loving you a long, long time—for

“When you were a tadpole and I was a fish
In the paleozoic time
And side by side through the ebbing tide
We sprawled through the ooze and slime,
Or flitted with many a caudal flip
In the depths of the cambric fen,
My heart was rife with the joy of life
For I loved you even then.”

I received your ideal gift—a box of El Toro cigars—this P. M. I passed the box over to the Captain. He looked at them and said, “Just my smoke! Where did you get them?” I said, “Where did you get That Pup?” He said that you were some girl for a first-class sergeant to write to and of course I agreed with him.

I have just received a letter from sister in dear old Memphis town. She said a little bird told her I was planning to pull something over her. Said she was afraid I was going to get married. Now can you beat that? Get married,—and haven’t even got a *sweetheart*! In fact, you are the only one who is generous enough to write to me! Poor old Crox and me! I have to advertise Croxton in order to get you to send him “That Pup,” and then that Croxton “pup” doesn’t send you a letter of thanks. But maybe the *Captain* will, as he is a married man. Ha! ha! Sis.

Our company was called on today for three men for oversea. I was the first one there, but the Colonel said, “Nit, I’m going to keep you here till I go myself.” Now wasn’t that encouraging for a sergeant who is longing for a chance to bayonet Fritz? I have to stay here and whip rookies into shape, and then they go away and leave me in this land of sugar cane, coon songs, sorghum molasses and disfranchised French nobility. I’d throw away my stripes and hit for second-class private if I thought that would give me a chance to sail.

Well, I must close. Be a sweet girl and continue to hand me little pieces of your heart.

With lots of love, I am yours (and I can prove it).

Bob.

Boo-hoo-hoo!—and who could blame me when you gave my will and testament down the country so hard and made all manner of fun of it! And then you laughed at me because boob Croxton refuses to thank me for the pup. And then laughed again about the Captain being a married man! Yes, you're a *Danny Deeever* to treat your Big Sis that way. Never mind, I ain't goin' to love you no more; and



I ain't never goin' to smile no more. I'm goin' to the back yard and cry like this till my "hollow muscular organ placed between the lungs and inclosed in the pericardium" breaks into 10,000 pieces! Then you'll be sorry.

But ere the fatal end arrives, I'm sending you a box of delicacies prepared by my own hand. Cooking is my forte, as the contents of the box will testify. Hope you'll enjoy it, and also hope that after I've evolved you'll sometimes think of the one who used to be your

Big Sis.

April 25th.

April 29th.

Dear Big Sis:

Your grief-stricken letter of the 25th just received. I am indeed sorry to think that I, a soldier and a gentleman (?), have been so stern and inhuman as to play the dickens with my own Big Sis's heart! Yes, just call me anything you wish and I'll gladly be it—and if there is anything you can't think of I'll be it too. Otherwise, Big Sis, I am at a loss as to what to do or to offer to do. However I'm sure there is some process for drying your tears if I could only fall heir to the secret.

It is possible that, having a Big Brother's rights, the most plausible thing to do is to kiss all those emblems of grief away. Then as my masculine nature of the Cave Man presents itself, I say, "Let her cry it out!" But the brutal instinct advises me to turn wife-beater and force you to can the grief and turn off the tear-stop. Then my love for my Big Sis piously advises me to apologize for my bone-headed stunt; and I think that the most sensible thing for me to do,—therefore I beg you to forgive me, honey, for I am a low-down, no account, heartless, uncouth ne'er-do-well, and if you say so I shall prefer charges against myself under the 96th article of war and give myself a court martial.

Now, sister dear, won't you quit crying and reconsider your decision to evolute on such short notice?

Tell mamma to wipe your little red nose, warm your tiny pink toes, give you a cup of hot chocolate, put you to bed and kiss your tears away.

I want to thank my Lady Bountiful for the nice lunch she sent me. And to think that it was prepared by her own hands! But honey, *when* did you prepare it?—for surely you were not in the ark with Noah and the rest of that bunch! You clear forgot to inclose a saw or a meat axe, therefore I have been unable to slice your meat. The batter-cakes were delicious even if they were pretty badly scorched. After soaking the biscuits overnight I was able to make an impression on them. But that lonesome egg!—where did you find it?—first one I've seen in years!

The Captain was asking about you today. He said, "That girl is nearer a match for you than anything I know of!" I told him I could handle seventy-five men drilling or on the firing line, but Big Sis kept me at "Attention" or "Parade rest" all the time.

Well, I must "In place—Halt."

Lovingly yours,

Big Bro. Bob.

P. S. How about a reconciliation?

May 3rd.

Yes sir-ree, I'll let you play in my back yard again even if you did poke fun at me and make me part with gallons of tears! Yes, I had made up my mind to die therefore I mailed you the farewell lunch—and then on the very same mail came your souvenir (the beautiful sofa-pillow cover with the eagle on it) and the dearest little note telling me that you like Big Sis pretty well. And now comes your apology of the 29th; so, taking everything into consideration, I have decided that instead of evolving, I'll sit down and tell my Big Brother that he's the very dearest boy in the whole world and that I love him more tenderly than I do an over-dose of nitric acid.

Now really, kid, I do love you—just as I'd love a dear little brother. Of course we both understand that that's the only way we must ever love one another—as brother and sis.

There are many reasons why I love my Big Brother. Some one has said,

“Errors, like straws, upon the surface flow,
He who would search for pearls must dive
below.”

So, in the first place, Big Sis loves you because she realizes that beneath the surface there are oceans of pearls in your character. In the second place, I love that wonderfully brilliant and original mind of yours.

In the third place, I love you because—because—well, perhaps it's because *I don't know you!*

But it seems real funny to think that we have never met; for you don't seem like a stranger at all. In fact, I feel that I've known you always. And p'raps we *did* meet 'way back yonder when we were tadpoles and worms! Evolution!—an interesting study!

By the way, have you read "Evolution Proving Immortality," by John O. Yeiser? It deals with evolution in a different, and to my mind a much more satisfactory manner than the Darwin theory. Darwin, I believe, claims that matter was the beginning of things, while this book teaches that mind existed first. It's very interesting.

But rats, I might read worlds of books explaining the hows, whys and wherefores of God's intricate plans and purposes, and when I had finished the lot I'd doubtless still be ready to say with Tennyson—

"Behold we know not anything;
I can but hope that good may fall
At last, far off, at last to all
And every winter change to spring."

And yet to me it's the most interesting thing in the world to theorize on the life to come. I wish you and I could tackle the subject face to face, for on paper is an unsatisfactory way of exchanging ideas along these lines. I've always had a great curiosity to know how God is going to manage things in the great and final wind-up of human affairs.

And doubtless you have a curiosity to know when I'm going to wind up this letter—so here goes.

Bye bye.

Big Sis.

P. S. Say, honey, I'm so glad you enjoyed the lunch. *Where did I get that egg?* Went Easter-egg huntin' and found it in a rabbit's nest—kep' it in cold storage till I biled it fer you.

May 6th.

My dear carefully compounded of all the best varieties of the sweetest brands of sweetness, and christened *Big Sis*:

Jove came to me last night like the angel in *About Ben Adhem* and informed me that I would receive a letter from you today. I'm glad to say that Jove was right, and am also glad that you have decided to give your prodigal brother one more chance. In the future I'm going to be a nice, good, soldierly brother and try not to cause sis to cry any more.

Yes, my dear, I thoroughly understand your love for me; for of course we would be foolish to sit up and rave about our love from a matrimonial standpoint. For you, *Big Sis*, my mind runs in a perfect *Big Brother* channel—the brand of love that we have been growing into all the time. Yes, I have two mighty good sisters—you, the sister whom I have never met, and my sister in Memphis; and I can't tell which one I would decide to quit writing to if one had to be dropped. Thank heaven I have both of you! But my Memphis sister has more confidence in her brother Bob than our Chaplain has in his cross. I know this,—that wherever I am I have her blessing. That is the reason the *Discredit* sheet in my Service Record is blank.

Well, sis, I have begun to get serious so I guess it's time to bring this to a close.

Did you ever want to go out alone, down by the cool waters of some rippling stream, stretch full length upon the violets and forget there is another person in the world—just wonder what Mr. Jay is sassing his wife about, and what Mrs. Redbird is calling to her mate for? That's the way I feel; I want to go back to Nature for a few hours—just forget and *think*,—jist waller in the grass for two long hours (then scratch chiggers for two months).

Dearie, please don't try to kid me. Don't I know that rabbits don't lay eggs? You can't fool an old soldier like me; for I know eggs grow on egg-plants.

Write again soon to

Your wise & otherwise

Big Brother.

St. Joseph's Hospital.

Memphis, Tennessee.

May 12, 1918.

Dear Bob:

Here I am in your own dear Memphis. Am to undergo a very serious operation tomorrow at 10 A. M. The trouble is due to complications resulting from hypertrophy of the lachrymal glands,—caused by that excessive cryin'. It has acted directly on my nervous system and produced a condition known as glosso labio laryngeal paralysis due to involvement of the motor nuclei of the medulla oblongata. There is degeneration of the corpus callosum, eminentia collateralis, corpora albicantia and velum interpositum. Other cerebral changes consist of sclerosis in the optic thalamus, corpus striatum, septum lucidum and also in the levator labii superioris alaeque nasi muscle, and corticle changes consisting of a diffused meningo encephalitis.

Do you s'pose I'll survive? I hope so—for your sake—but for fear I don't, you'd better hurry up and write to me 'fore I shuffle off this mortal flesh and blood—but mostly bones!

If I happen to pass away tell the married Captain bye-bye for me; also tell him I say to keep an eye on you and make you walk in the straight and narrow path that leads to where I be.

Good bye—luck to you.

Big Sis.

St. Joseph's Hospital.

Tomorrow at 10 A. M.

Operation postponed. Priest says my spiritual condition too anemic at present, so I'm having him pray my sins away before I lay me down to sleep on the operating table.

Now of course I might safely go on to purgatory and let him pray me out, 'cept he says that "a bird in the hand's worth two in the bush."

I suppose you're a Catholic? If not, then you and I are going to have some more rag-chewin'.

Don't know how long I'll be here, but if it takes the priest several days to get my sins straightened out I'll try to get up town in the meantime and send you a box o' Memphis candy.

Bye bye.

Big Sis.

Camp Beauregard, La.

5-15-1918.

Dear Debilitated Damsel:

Your letter of the 12th comes drifting into camp like a rookie returning from a ten day furlough.

Sis, I certainly am sorry to hear of your awful condition. Doubtless you have been drinking HSO_4 when you should have been drinking H_2O . But after thoroughly diagnosing and studying your case I have come to the conclusion that it's a dreadful zeaze you've got. I think it equivalent to loco in coco. Gracious, Sis, you have no idea how uneasy I am about you; for you may wind up with something terrible,—like in-growing toe nails!

Yes, honey, if you should cash in I'll sure tell the Captain good bye for you. And I'll try to keep in any path that will lead me to where *you* are.

As soon as you have recovered from the operation you must by all means stroll out to see sister. But for goodness' sake don't go while that blooming nephew of mine is there for that boy worships Jesse James and acts like Tom Sawyer. He goes to school and I'll bet sister will be sorry when school closes. Sister is fifteen years older than I. And by the way, before you leave the "Honorable mention" list and

begin looking over the "Among others present" I will call your attention to my niece out there—a good looking little bundle of hatefulness.

But sis, I don't like the idea of your hanging around the hospital and claiming to be sick. Now if I thought you were really ill I would throw a few fits—but it's some more of Big Sis's faking, that's all. However please let me hear from you by return mail.

Lovingly,

Big Brother.

May 16th.

Dear wicked Sis:

It's too bad that your spiritual condition is at such a low ebb, however I hope the priest won't be in too big a hurry to get it toned up, for I'm anxious for that box of candy you spoke of sending.

You say you are going to start another row with Big Bro. if he isn't a Catholic. Now is it possible that I have really adopted a nice Big Sis who is a Catholic? Thank goodness we will not have a very big fuss about *that!*

Am inclosing some kodak pictures just to show you what I'm teaching the boys to fight with. Don't look at me, but look at my good friend, Lewis Machine Gun. It is my pal. The other rifle shown in the picture is a French gun. The French swear by it; but our own arms are far superior to any Frenchman's product. We never found the place where we were not on top. Like the U. S. soldier when he got drunk and went to sleep among the old Egyptian mummies in the English Museum. He awoke next morning and seeing all the mummies, said, "Resurrection morning, and I'm the first sun-of-a-gun up—the United States is ahead yet!"

Sis, I won't worry you with a long letter this time, for of course in your extremely nervous and weakened condition you can't feel equal to the ordeal of reading a lengthy epistle, even though it be from your

Big Brother.

Peabody Hotel, Memphis, Tenn.
May 23, 1918.

Dear Bob:

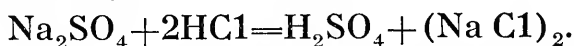
Guess I'll bid your Memphis town goodbye pretty soon. And as I can't fool an old soldier like you I suppose I'll have to confess that I am not, and have not been, a patient here,—for thank the Lord I have good health even if I don't weigh but 105 lbs.

My patient went home yesterday, and I'm hangin' out at the Peabody for a day or two.

Referring to your letter of the 15th, I laughed when you said you had diagnosed my case, studied it thoroughly and decided that I had been drinking HSO_4 instead of H_2O . Now honey, didn't you get the cart before the horse when you diagnosed, and *then* studied? That's rather out of the ordinary.

However I sure ain't goin' to drink any HSO_4 —'cause as well as I remember, there's no such formula in all the universe. *My* chemistry says that the valence of H is *one*, while the valence of the SO_4 group is *two*; therefore it takes *two* atoms of H to combine with the SO_4 . So your formula for sulphuric acid should be H_2SO_4 —See?

But if I wanted H_2SO_4 in my system I'd probably take it this way:



Then the H_2SO_4 wouldn't form till the first member of the equation had passed the cardiac end of the stom-

ach. You certainly offered a grave prognosis of my case but failed to suggest any treatment. However we won't scrap about that, as my health is almost perfect and I don't need any treatment.

But say, who said anything about my being a Catholic? No, I'm not a Catholic though I don't doubt there being hundreds of members of the Catholic Church whose chances for heaven are lots better than mine. I s'pose it ain't what church a person belongs to, but it's probably the heart and the life that count with God.

Now my heart tries awfully hard to keep on the sober side, and yet my life is always buttin' in and playin' the deuce with that heart! Poor old heart, it's so full o' scars and scratches I don't see how it keeps on beatin'! I imagine God will be glad when the time comes for it to stop so He won't have to be bothered with me any more, 'cause I'm always having to get forgiveness for something mean I've done or said or thought. I don't know whether He's ever going to let me get a peep into heaven or not, but I often ask Him to let me go to hell—whatever it may be—if my going there could be the means of saving those who have been nearest and dearest to me on earth. And when I happen to lay up a little treasure now and then (I'm speaking of heavenly treasures) I ask Him to give this one to so-and-so, and that one to so-and-so; and do you know it's lots of fun to lay up treasures with that thought in mind!

But here I've got strung off on God and heaven and treasures and hell and am about to forget to tell you that I'd be delighted to meet your sister, also your Tom Sawyer nephew and that hateful little niece. But I wonder if you do think I'm going to wander out and introduce myself to your sister! Not much!—for she might want to know who I am, what I'm doing, where I'm going, etc., and I might not want to tell her.

Now I must stop and go to town. If I run across some candy I'll try to steal it for you.

Love from

Big Sis.

May 23rd.

Dear Big Sis:

I'm so disappointed, for I have not received a letter from you since Napoleon was acting first class private. Was your operation fatal?—if so, you should have wired me as soon after death as possible. If I don't hear from you soon I will be down on the River Styx trying to get Charon to ferry me over on a credit. But tradition tells me that I will get a letter soon, and I hope tradition is not trying to run in opposition to Ananias but is rather inclined to follow in George Washington's footsteps.

Now don't become disgusted just because I mailed you two or three kodak prints,—for honey, you can never tell what I may do when I get to France. If I get blown into the ground by a shrapnel, then blown out again by a trench mortar, and some big-footed corporal step in my face with his field shoes, I may then pull off a Nathan Hale stunt and come entirely up to your expectations. But previous to my participating in such a patriotic pleasantry I want to plead permission to pester you with a pathetic petition. Will you grant it?

Well, I must rush into the bean line and drape myself over the mess trough. Please write soon to

Big Brother.

May 25th.

Dear Sis:

I received your letter of the 23rd, also *some* candy from you this P. M. You dear, everything-worth-loving combination of a Big Sis, I can never tell you how much I appreciate the kindnesses you have shown me. If I were to make the attempt I would surely hit on the wrong formula, as I did in my sulphuric acid. Yes, it's too bad that I left the "2" out of my H_2SO_4 —anyhow I gave you some mighty good water!

Now, sis, you will readily understand why I am laboring under a spell of such blamed ignorance when I tell you that I never went to school but two days in all my life. Nobody was there so I went home—I went on Saturday and Sunday. But to square up on the subject, I can look clear through a silk waist or a blue shirt and read a heart about as quick as a general court martial can shoot a man under the 86th article of war.

And so you're not a Catholic! Well, neither am I. If you want to know my religion I will tell you. I am a believer in the Golden Rule.

Honey, I'm hoping to get a furlough in July if we are not "Over There" by then, and if I succeed I'm certainly going to call 'round and see if the "Welcome" on your door-mat includes me. Now I'm not coming on a matrimonial tour, for I don't care to leave any war brides behind.

Our friend Crox is moving. Sis, there's not another Crox in this world. He has about as much confidence in women as I have in the Egyptian belief of soul transmigration. But put him man to man, he is a *man*. The word *fear* is not in his vocabulary.

It is some later than it was, so I will have to can the chatter.

Yours till I find a seat in a street car on Sat. night.

Big Bro. Bob.

T——, Tenn.
May 31, 1918.

Dear Bob:

It has been an age since I've had an opportunity to sit down, relax myself completely and write a letter. During the last six or eight weeks all my letters have been written while I was on a strain one way or another and most of them were written by piecemeals. But tonight I'm feeling like a bird out of a cage—nothing to do except write; and by the way, I'm in a letter-writing humor and have chosen you as the victim upon whom to release my prisoned thoughts. So put on the whole armor of patience and prepare to endure long-suffering, for there's no telling when I'm going to stop.

Gee, ain't it a luxury to have a dear pal that I can dump my manifold moods upon! I could have asked no kinder gift from heaven than just such a pal,—and then to think that it came without the asking! That was pretty good of God, wasn't it?

So you're thinking of wandering back to Tennessee some time in July; also of coming to T——, but not on a matrimonial tour! No, honey, I should say you're *not* coming on a matrimonial tour, and even if you were you'd hastily change your mind as soon as you observed that I was a fish while you were a tadpole! Yes, kid, I'm much nearer your sister's age than I am your own—and that's no joke! In fact, that's the very reason I've always felt so free to treat

you as I have; for if you had been a man who was my senior I should have left unsaid and undone many things that I have sent your way. Yes, I regard you as a dear little kid brother whom I can treat just as good or just as mean as the spirit moves me.

But I haven't fully decided whether I'm going to let you ring my door bell or not,—'cause I had a dream the other night. I dreamed that you came to T——, and it didn't take us thirty seconds to become thoroughly anti-crazy about each other. I stamped my foot at you and you stamped your foot at me and said you'd just wait at the station for a train back to Memphis. I then bade you "so-long" and left you all by your lonesome. Now do you know that my dreams always come true, 'specially if I think about 'em the next morning before breakfast. I tried my best not to think of this one till I could eat my toast and chocolate—but do you know that as soon as I opened my eyes that dream was staring me right in the face! Therefore I haven't half-way made up my mind that I'm *ever* going to risk letting you come to T—— and having "A FOOT-STAMPING SCENE AT THE DEPOT" headline in the next issue of the "T—— Herald-Democrat."

Yes, come on with your petition even if you *are* a mutton-head. No, honey, you didn't have to tell an old lady like me that you'd never been to school; for I hadn't half finished reading the first letter you wrote me until I said to myself sez I,—“Pity that pore

boy couldn't have had a year or two in school!" But, dearie, there's some consolation in the thought that many of our greatest men and women got their education after they had passed their teens. Take myself, for instance!—why, chile, I never saw inside of a schoolroom till I was ten years past your present age. So

When all this war is over, dear Bob.

When all the strife is done,

Just come along back and start to school—

You ignorant sun-of-a-gun!

Crox and his pup had to vamoose! Glad of it!—and you needn't tell me where the moss-back has gone either, 'cause I don't care to have any of my thoughts follow him. Anybody that hasn't got heart enough to say "Thank you" for a nice pup doesn't deserve more than an icy stare from the world in which they live.

Now I know you're crazy about Crox and in spite of my knockin' I can hear you yell, "Hurrah for Crox!" And I yell, "Hurrah for Bob for standing up for his pal, Crox!" You're like Pat was when the priest was reproving him for his sins. Priest says, "Pat, you're living an ungodly life and it's sure going to land you in hell." Says Pat, "Then *hurrah for hell!*—darn a man that won't stand up for his own country!"

Dearie, I started this brief communication with the full determination to write you a long letter, but

alas!—I'm getting sleepy and will have to bid you goodnight before I'm half through. I'll meet you in dreamland—sweet dreamy dreamland in the Valley of the Moon.

Lovingly,

Big Sis.

Camp Beauregard, La.

June 3rd, 1918.

Dear Dee:

I have just received your tartarus-infected letter and as I have nothing to do except polish my rifle, play ball and talk sarcastic I'll spend a part of the evening writing to you.

Now you have half sassed me for declaring that I loved you, but up to the present stage of the game you haven't bluffed me in the least. I love your heart, and if I love your heart then I must love you, whatever your age may be. But even if you are four score years old, your head is old enough to have worn out three of your bodies. So in spite of the fact that you were a young girl when Shakespeare was writing his "Mid-summer's Nightmare," lets you and I shake hands in mutual friendship and call ourselves lucky to have run across each other. I had rather have one friend like you than ninety sweet-hearts

But Sis, don't get it into your head that I have no sweetheart; for I have—one that I love with all my heart. She is the first thing you see on sailing into New York harbor. Her name is The Goddess of Liberty. The most beautiful thing in the world is the seven horizontal bars on a white field with forty-eight white stars in a field of blue.

Neither have you bluffed me out of my intention of coming to T——, even if I must come without an invitation; for as to our falling out, I could get along with Jesse James or play chess with Captain Kidd.

But I did think Big Sis had more charity for unfortunate simps than to ridicule their sap-headedness. Anyhow my papa he has a good job working in a livery stable; however I don't care to let all the young girls know about it for fear they would be trying to marry me for my family income.

The new draft will be in soon, then away back to rookie drill and start all over again. So while I am trying to teach our new fighting men this warm weather please remember me in your prayers for I may slip often. "I slip, I slide, I glance, I glide" equal to Tennyson's brook.

I'm yours (when I get out of the army),

Bob.

June 8th.

Dear Bobbie:

Am tickled to death that you have decided not to go clear back on this Big Sis just 'cause she happened to get a running start on you in the process of evolution. But you'd better look out, for you say you can read hearts and then declare that you love mine! Now that proves that you also need some schoolin' in *hearts!*—for while the stethoscope says that mine is in the right place as far as location is concerned, the horoscope proves that it can't be trusted in any other particular. You see I'm a child of April (the very middle o' the month) and the stars don't have very complimentary things to say about those children.

Funny old world' ain't it? But what an interesting world! And nothing in it so interesting as the study of human nature—the study of our own selves, for instance. Now did you ever know a greater mystery or a greater miracle than your own self? As some one has ably expressed it,—“What a paradox is man! What a novelty, what a chaos, what a bundle of contradictions, what a prodigy! A judge of all things, feeble worm of the dust, depositary of truth, follower of uncertainty and error, the glory and shame of the universe.” In other words, a combination of god and devil! Now ain't you glad you're not the One who has the job of judging such a *Jekyll*-

Hyde old world? I just wonder what God is going to do about it.

But however interesting this world may be I believe the next one will be tenfold more so, therefore I sometimes feel that I can hardly wait for the future life,—the time when we shall begin to understand and appreciate God's wonderful plans and purposes. I'm glad we can't understand them here; for it's so much fun to live by faith,—and then, too, it's so much fun to figure on what God is going to do about this, that, etc. Gee, I'm so glad I'm livin'!—And gee, I'll be so glad when I'm dead!

Speaking of paradoxes, prodigies, etc., what could be a more inexpressibly novel state of affairs than the thought of your claiming an Iron Lady for a sweetheart, instead of a real live twenty-one year old girl! But never mind, you'll some day be humming another tune! Now if you hadn't pulled off that Rip Van Winkle stunt and allowed me to get twenty years ahead of you I might fill the bill my own sweet self! See what you lost by being so sleepy headed!

I must now prepare to bring this to a close. Write again when the spirit moves you, for I enjoy your letters very much. I don't believe I've ever derived as much genuine fun and pleasure from any letters as I have from your own. As I've told you before, I'm crazy about your originality of thought and expression. And, aside from that, I'm delighted to have found the pearls beneath the surface,—pearls far

more abundant than one usually finds in a person of your age. Yes, you're a young man in years but you're an old one in thought and experience.

If you ever take a notion to come to T——, rest assured that you'll be more than welcome.

Lovingly,

Big Sis.

June 14th.

“Such is the state of man—Today he puts forth the tender leaves of hope; tomorrow blossoms and bears his blushing honors thick upon him. The third day comes a frost, a killing frost, and then he falls.”

Such is the story of friendship—Today we congratulate ourselves upon finding a friend after our own heart; one who understands and is understood by us; one whose comradeship we feel we can count upon for eternity. Tomorrow—“UP GOES THE BUCKET!!”

Big Sis.

June 18th.

My dear Big Sis:

I have just arrived from the artillery range where we spent two weeks in bivouac. Now if you care to have that word defined it is something like this,—one blanket between me and Mother Earth, a thirty-pound boulder in the small of my back, with a hole in the ground for a pillow; one blanket and a million little stars to cover with; a bunkie that has won the cup at thirteen snoring contests. That, my dear, is bivouac. I repeated so many times the little verse, “Oh Death, where is thy sting?” until I got it mixed up and was saying, “Oh, Bed, where is thy spring?” When Sherman pulled off that proverb, “Armed strife is Hades” he was sleeping in bivouac.

On my return to camp I was greeted with your letter of the 8th, also your page which contained an expression from a master mind,—an expression that London or Kipling would call a phrase. *Deep?*—yes, so deep that it is almost out of the question to try to fathom it. In military terms we would call it a thirteen-inch coast defense piece. Or if it should be named by rank we would say Lieutenant General. But if named according to importance it would be an Acting Corporal.

But let’s analyze the phrase—“UP GOES THE BUCKET!” Now *UP* designates the direction in

which the bucket is making its flight while laughing at gravitation.

GOES gives one the exact knowledge of what the bucket has in mind.

THE is a little Anglo-Saxon adjective used to announce to the ignorant public which bucket we allude to.

BUCKET, the chief character of the phrase, gives us information as to what is making the unexpected ascension.

Now when we line up the four words, with UP on the left flank and BUCKET holding its position on the right flank, then place GOES in the left center and THE takes position as support to the flanking patrol, BUCKET, it forms a beautiful sentence well spoken.

I greatly enjoyed your nice long letter. Now in reply to your comment on my Iron Lady sweetheart I will say that perhaps you're right about my some day finding a real live sweetheart—but—well, sis, I once placed my love and confidence in a pretty girl who had a wealth of beautiful hair, two dimples, an innocent smile, and eyes that made one dream of beautiful violets blooming in the forest. But sis, I now find myself repeating Kipling's "Vampire," for

"Now I know she never could know
And did not understand."

Of course I was younger then but I've learned better now, and I can look into a pair of blue eyes without growing foolish. And when it comes to love of women, I have you and sister. No, I don't feel that my twenty years' sleep was in vain. But for that nap we might never have run across each other; and as it is I have found a character that I didn't dream ever existed—a friend that I wouldn't exchange for a ham sandwich.

I was studying the enticing subject Furlough, but there is nothing doing for awhile now—except to bid you goodnight and pay my respects to the Dream Gods.

Yours irrespectively,

Bob.

June 27, 1918.

Dear Bob:

Your letter received O. K. Was beginning to wonder whether you'd gone off to France without saying scat; but find that you were having the time of your life in bivouac.—Gone back to Nature; lying down to sleep on the lap of Mother Earth with

“A million eyes of the night-time
Sleeplessly watching you slumber.”
(And a host of hungry mosquitoes
Exceeding the stars in number?)

But what a foolish interrogation, for of course you had screens while in bivouac.

Speaking of mosquitoes reminds me of a little “spasm” (may I use your word?) I ran across the other day:

“God made the star-hung skies for us
The singing trees and hills and lakes;
Of course He made mosquitoes too—
But everybody makes mistakes!”

Now is that also too deep for your comprehension? It's too utterly bad that your untrained little mind is unable to cope with the thoughts which I present for your consideration. Of course I realize that they *are* awfully deep—in fact, a man once undertook to get to the bottom of one of my thoughts. If you want

to know what a time he had, just call on him in purgatory.

I must congratulate you upon your analysis of that wonderfully elevating phrase, "Up goes the bucket." But speaking of buckets, do you know I've seen more buckets go up in the air than you can shake a stick at, and, try ever so hard, I can't bring 'em down any more! They're like the "Lost, yesterday, somewhere between sunrise and sunset two golden hours each set with sixty diamond minutes. No reward offered for they are gone forever." Now ain't that the dickens?

Let me give you an illustration of the cause of one of the buckets taking its upward flight. He was a cracker-jack friend of mine who went west and met a girl that he became crazy about, but her mother objected to his visiting the girl without some letters of recommendation. So he wrote and asked me, among others, to write to the mother, and requested that I send him a copy of what I wrote. Well, I wrote the mother the very nicest letter that I could fix up about him. But ye gods!—you should have seen the copy I sent him. It was the most ridiculous thing you ever read. So *up went the bucket*, and he doesn't know to this good day but that I sent him a correct copy of what I wrote.

By the way, how are your El Toros holding out? Wire me at once when the last one goes so I can send you a note of condolence.

I was much interested in the story of your little vampire sweetheart. Some one has said that the

greatest sorrows are (a) "To love what is great and good, to seek it and fail." (b) "To love what we think is greatest and best, to attain it and find it worthless." Yes, I know your disappointment was great indeed but you have risen above it and have come out a stronger, a better, and a wiser man. I hope you'll some day find a sweetheart who will be worthy of your love.

Now I must stop and write a birthday letter to a very dear friend—an old man in New York who has just passed the 75th milestone on the journey of life. Don't you imagine he's awfully tired? Gee, I hope God will excuse me from walking that far, 'cause He knows how lazy I am and how I hate long journeys. And for that very reason He may be looking down at me right now and saying to Himself, "You little imp, I'm going to make you walk ninety miles!"

Bye bye. Love from

Big Sis.

Camp Beauregard, La.

July 1st, 1918.

Dear Sis:

I have here a half portion of tablet, a product of the American Pencil Company and an inspiration like unto a Ford on a zero morning, therefore I come to pour my trials and tribulations into your sympathetic ears.

My El Toros have gone down in history. The imps have thrown dirt on my rifle. I've lost one of my collar ornaments and have torn my pants. My canteen is leaking and my matches are wet. Outside of these and a few other trifles I am a happy-go-lucky soldier, fearing God and the first sergeant.

Right here upon the military crest of this letter I wish to say that you played one good joke on your friend when you mailed him your copy. But the hardest welt you ever hit me was when you sent me your picture at Camp Stanley, Texas. When mail call blew I cheesed it for my mail. I opens up said picture in one hurried manner. Every sun-of-a-gun in my platoon was there, waiting to feast their eyes upon the nice photo that I had received. Well, you can imagine how I felt trying to explain things. I have often laughed over the thing. Now I'm going to tell you about one of my jokes.

My pal, Ray, and I were rooming together at the home of a good old M. D. who had a daughter. One

night while Ray and the girl were at the show I stole the skeleton from Mr. M. D.'s office. I carried this assortment of bones to our room, placed it in bed and covered it up. Then I hid in the adjoining room. Now Ray had an unbecoming habit of calling me from dreamland when he came in. So that night at about 12 o'clock he appeared upon the scene-of-action and, as usual, called out, "Bob, oh Bob!" As no response was forthcoming he leaned over the bed and gave Bob (?) a good shaking. Mr. Skeleton said, "Cackle, cackle, cacklè!" Ray, not understanding such protest, pulled the cover off. And Sis, he didn't put that cover back either! The noise brought the doctor up in a hurry.

Now in order that my days might be long upon the land, I spent the rest of the night at the hotel and went back next morning with an air of ignorance. But the looks I received were like the snow scene in the "Two Orphans." The girl was just hating me on general principles. Mr. M. D. said his skeleton was not for fools to play with. Ray 'lowed that was going too far with a joke. And little brown-eyed Bobbie went out to build up a new friend or two,—or, in other words, I went away to graze in new pastures.

The bugle will blow pay-call in the morning, after which the 153rd Inf. will reign in peace and harmony for awhile. Crap games will be the supreme pastime for a few days. Then the boys will be borrowing from the lucky guy.

But Sis, please don't mark your big brother down as a crap-shooter, for that is one fault that I have overlooked in taking up every fault that I could find. So get the ledger of your friends and turn to the page marked "Merits and Credits of Big Bro." Fill up the entire page with that one mark, for you may never find another chance to give me the benefit of a redeeming feature.

But I guess I'd better close as I've begun to brag on myself.

With love, I am your

Big Bro.

July 6th.

“A friend in need is a friend indeed,” therefore I’m saluting you with a box of select cigars, together with a brand-new pair of pants, a solid gold collar ornament and a package of perfectly dry matches. If you’ll send me your canteen I’ll have the leak repaired; also your rifle and I’ll wash the dirt off’n it. Anything else I can do for you?

Big Sis.

July 10th.

Dear Lady Liberal:

I have just received your wonderful gifts. The first thing to mention is the box of cigars—a harem of dusky beauties, fifty in a row. I now have one of them carefully placed in a satisfied smile.

“And a snow-white cloud unfolding
Fills the tent with haze and vapor,
Fills the air with dreamy softness

Fills my heart with dreamy pleasure,” as its curling fragrance ascends to the top of the tent and there takes up the duties of sentry against all gloom entering into this soldier’s castle. The great god, Nicoteen, is supreme commander and I am master of my own favorite ship, Day Dreams.

I sail the calm waters of What’s the use Worrying? I drift into the days when I was care free,—nothing mattered. Down by the shallow brook I did not have the thought of why things were there nor from whence they came. Just like the rule of two and two equal four. Why does it do it? Just because it does; that settles the question. The cool brook was there to babble over the round stones. The daisies and blue violets were there because that was the most beautiful place the Flower Fairies could find to plant

their part of Nature. Why did the dragon flies skim the cool waters? They were to the Paradise what the luster is to the diamond—they were the “cutting” of the goddess of Beauty.

BUT—that does not solve the size of the pants that came with the cigars. Now let's figure on them. They looked something like this:



Were you trying to fit me up according to *principle*? If so, then don't you know that principle demands that we also cut down on the size of our *buttons*?

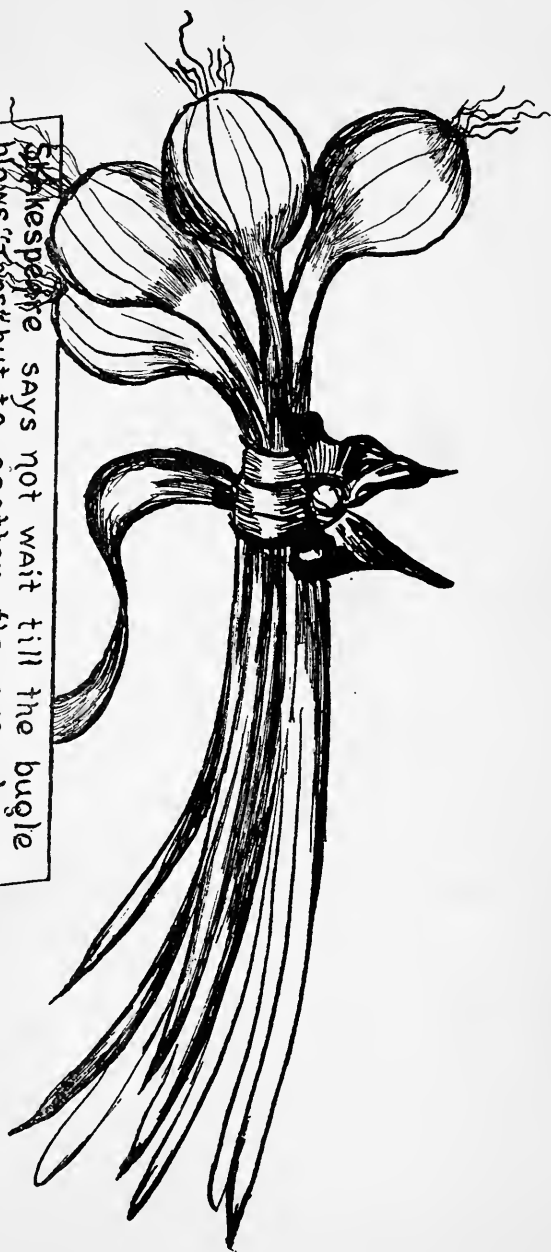
The Captain was in the orderly room when I received your package. He insisted that he should smoke a good cigar. I opened them up, and when the pants came into view he like to have thrown a fit. He said, “That's a great girl—she must be as crazy as *you* are.” I told him he shouldn't make such remarks about a lady.

Vee Dee, you are a wonderful pal,—everything worth loving all mixed up in a harmonizing medley. Yes, God has given me everything desirable in a

friend. When the bugle blows "Taps" and I am lowered to my last resting place I want Big Sis to send on a flower or two (my favorite flower is onions).

As ever,

Bob.



Spokespeople says not wait till the bugle
blows "Taps" but to scatter flowers along
life's path way; therefore
Ere "Taps" have blown for you, Kid
(you dog-goned little pest):
I send these Fragrant Flowers -----
The Flower you love the best.

Big Sis.

July 15th.

Dear Bob:

When I sit down to write to you I always have so much to say that I hardly know where to begin. But the first thing I want to tell you is that the pant buttons were to remind you how hard it is for some folks to get to heaven.—See Matt. XIX:24. Then the next thing I happen to think of is your joke with the skeleton. I sure had a good laugh about it. But I'm now going to give you my masterpiece in meanness. Here it is:

Donic and I had been sweethearts for a long time; so one Saturday night—just a few days before Christmas—when he was calling, we were discussing the Chinese people and he made this remark, "I don't believe a Chinaman has a soul." I said, "Why not?" He replied, "Because they eat rats; and anybody that would eat a rat couldn't have a soul." So just for fun I said, "Now I've always wanted to eat a piece of rat, for I don't see why rat wouldn't taste just as good as chicken or any other meat." He replied in a very dignified, iceberg tone, "Vee Dee Ess, the day you eat a piece of rat we'll quit!" I said, "Oh, rats!—I think I should be allowed to eat anything I please." Then he said, "You may eat anything except rat!"

Well, when he left that night he made an engagement to call the next afternoon. And as good luck would have it, that very Sat. night the nicest rat

found his way into the trap that Dad had set. So I gets that rat, and after Dad has gone to church I desecrates the Sabbath day (but the ox was in the ditch, you see,) by cooking said rat good and tender and making some sandwiches for said Donic. That afternoon Donic appears bright and early after dinner. In a little while I brought in the plate of sandwiches. After he had eaten one of them and started to take another, I said, "Rats make awfully nice sandwiches, don't they?" He said, "Dee, what do you mean?" I explained that I meant I was so glad he was enjoying my rat sandwiches. He said, "Do you really mean that I've been eating rat?" Sez I, "I sho' do; and I'm now going to eat some too." So I ate one of the sandwiches—for really I'm not mean enough to give anybody else something to eat that I wouldn't be game enough to tackle myself. He didn't say much but he sure was hot; and I said, "I feel just this way about it, Donic,—if you don't care any more for me than to allow such an insignificant thing as a rat (or even an elephant or a hippopotamus) to come between us, then *we'd better quit!*" So he left—still hot. The next day I tied a blue ribbon 'round that rat's tail and mailed it to him for a Christmas present.

Well, Donic finally married a woman who doesn't eat rats. But just think what a narrow escape I had, for if I hadn't eaten that rat I might never have run across you,—and I wouldn't give you for forty sweet-hearts that wouldn't let me eat what I please. By

the way, you're going to love Big Sis just the same, ain't you, whether she eats rats or not?

Well, old boy, how are you standing the times? It doesn't seem like summer here, for the days are neither too hot nor too cool—just right. "Days left over from Eden" the poets would call them, and the nights are cool enough for cover.

I've just returned from your Memphis town, where I was on a surgical case for a few days. I don't like surgical cases; but this was a friend, so I could hardly refuse to be with her. Surgical cases as a rule are easier to nurse than medical ones but they are not nearly so interesting, therefore I graduated in osteopathy and also studied medicine in order to become a good "two in one" nurse. Nothing so interesting as to get on a bad case, study symptoms, look out for complications, watch the effect of different treatments, etc.

Hoping the clinical thermometer registers your entire anatomy and physiology at 98.6°, I am

Theoretically and practically your big sis,

Vee Dee Ess.

Camp Beauregard, La.

July 18th.

Dear Dee:

I come to thank you for that box of delightful flowers. They must have been plucked from a fragrant garden of divine fragrance—a florescent spot presided over by the fairy, Garlic. Doubtless their odoriferousness was in evidence all along the line from T—— to Camp Beauregard.

Vee Dee, I certainly enjoyed your rat joke. Now as to you and I fussing about what you eat, *go to it!* Eat rats, snakes, bugs, or even limburger cheese—if your gas mask is working. However I understand that it is very unhealthy to eat powdered glass, therefore as a friend I ask you to refrain from trying to satisfy your craving for this delicacy. And I'm also going to request you not to take too much violent exercise just after drinking nitro-glycerine. Otherwise eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you may get married.

Well, I am still in hopes of going to France soon, for I had rather fight some myself than to let George do it all.

Morpheus is calling, so I must hie me away to dream-land.

Yours till Father Time trims his whiskers,

Bob.

7/20/'18.

My dear Neither:

The Colonel has just made a talk to the men and told them all to write to their mothers and sweethearts; but as I have Neither, I have chosen you.

I often wish I had a nice little sweetheart so I could tell her she was the cutest girl that ever wanted to vote. Of course I would be lying, but that is half the game. Then she would say, "Oh Bob, you are the dearest man that ever got caught in the draft!" She would be lying, but that's the other half the game.

After awhile Dan Cupid decides that these lies are growing monotonous so he sends them around to the preacher. Mr. Preacher asks Adam if he promises to pay Eve's board, and buy her roses, rings and rouge for the next ten years; or until "divorce do us part;" or until Father Time commands, "As you were." Adam holds up his right grenade tosser and chirps, "Yer on, Doc." So Sergeant Preacher commands, "Carry on!"

Then I, being Adam, would have all that is desirable in this world except a thirty-day furlough. I would hie me and Birdie away to a nice modern barracks well equipped with pianos, victrolas and jew's harps. Birdie would blow "Retreat" on the jew's harp while I stood at "Present Arms" according to "Infantry Drill Regulations." Then Jove would reign

supreme in his celestial hall, and Birdie and I would be at peace with the whole army.

Sis, they are talking of taking this whole division to France soon. I again have hopes of becoming a fighting partner of the Iron Lady in New York harbor.

I will now bid you adieu.

Romantically yours,

Bob.

T——, Tenn.

July 24th.

Bobbie Dear:

Your two letters are before me and I'll hasten to reply before I get off on another case. I've been off duty for a week now, but prior to that time had been in a rush for a long time.

Say Bob, I believe I'll tell you of an experience that I had with a patient last December. When the physician phoned me he said he didn't think it right to call me on such a case without letting me know what I'd be up against. Said that the family—which consisted of a husband, wife and three children—lived in a little three-room shanty in a corn field, had absolutely no conveniences and would have to depend upon the neighbors to pay the nurse. The husband, who was the patient, had been sick with typhoid fever for seven weeks, was poorly nourished and had just begun to have hemorrhages.

Well, I went and I sure had a time! The man was a tenant on a Mr. H—'s farm. Mr. H— is a well-to-do but very timid old bachelor who lives with his three sisters; and he was just preparing to have the shanty moved near the road and fixed up comfortably for the winter when the man got sick.

We had some perfectly dreadful weather in December,—such an unusually deep snow fell on Friday night and then on the following Sunday night the

thermometer was fifteen degrees below nothing. I was with the patient at that time.

When the deep snow fell on Friday it blew under the shingles and through the cracks in the roof. Then after awhile it began to melt and pour down from the ceiling. There wasn't an umbrella on the place, so we got an oilcloth from the kitchen table and put it on the patient's bed. I put a quilt around me and a cap on my head. About nine o'clock that night I sent Mr. H— a note which ran thus:

"Snowstorm on the outside and rainstorm on the inside! Please be so kind as to send us half a dozen umbrellas, also a rain-coat apiece and a storm-cover for the patient's bed. This house has been leaking so profusely that there's a dandy swimming pool in the middle of the patient's room. If I had my bathing suit over here I'd sure have a good dive.

Wishing you a good night's rest without the rain-drops playing pit-a-pat on your bed, I am truly,

Miss Ess."

Well, Mr. H— crawled from his cozy corner, came right over and helped shovel snow from the ceiling. But it continued to snow all night, so of course it continued to rain on us all night. We dried the floor next morning by putting coals of fire in tubs and dragging them around. One morning I picked and dressed a chicken in the patient's room, for the kitchen was like being out of doors. One day a calf got into the room adjoining the one occupied by the patient and became rather noisy, and the patient

said, "What is that in the other room?" I said, "Oh, it's just a calf trying to learn to skate." Once a cow got on the porch and knocked at the patient's door. I went to the door and then turned to the patient and said, "It's a cow,—must I let her in?"

Now I've mentioned only a few of the scores of unheard-of things that occurred during my ten days there. It certainly was some experience! But really I had lots of fun, and the patient thought I was the limit. He got well O. K.

Referring to your letter of the 18th, I will say that it's awfully nice of you not to go back on Big Sis just because she eats rats and other varmints. It's no cross for me to do without wheat, sugar and all kinds of meat 'cept rat—but that's a luxury that I cannot agree to part with, war or no war.

So you're hoping to go to France soon. Well, you mustn't pull off a stunt like some of our boys—go over there and get captured by a little French girl. Yes, I hope the arrow that Cupid sends into your heart will be a product of the U. S. A.

Oh yes of course, as you said in your last letter, telling lies is entirely permissible in the game of Hearts, for "the recording angel doesn't pay any attention to the lies a man tells when he is in love." So when Cupid strikes just falsify your levelest, get married and live happy till death—not divorce—do come along and gently lay his hand upon one o' the hearts.

'Twill most break my neck if my dear pal has to go to France—but—of course your sweetheart (the Iron Lady) must be protected.

Let Big Sis hear from you again soon, and remember that in her garden of Memory is a beautiful flower ever blooming for you.

Lovingly your

Either!

Camp Beauregard, La.

July 28, 1918.

Sister dear, I have just received a scand'lous welcome letter from you. Nothing startling in that, is there? Probably you were expecting the bright and theorizing morning-glory to receive a letter from you. Perhaps you remember writing the letter. But do not argue with me, for again I must state that you have written me with malice and forethought—consequences be blamed. Hush woman! I have the evidence here before me, plainly written in your own hand with your own pen.

Now since I have quieted the fuss I again cry out in agony, "I *have* received a letter from you!" Very glad to come in contact with such a poetical work as calves in the house and cows doing the Poe's raven stunt, "Tapping at my chamber door." Of course you welcomed the cow into your midst—for not even you, a rat-eating nurse, would turn a poor, desolate, dejected, rejected, subjected to be inspected cow from your adopted bungalow, where, over the surrounding landscape, the golden corn once grew tall and stately, but at the time of your distinguished visitor was covered with a white shroud.

Yes, my dear, I think the Christian act was for you to invite the cow in, give her a good lecture on beauty sleep, inquire whether she was well satisfied with the present price of her milk, and whether she liked timothy better than alfalfa.

But I'll now dismiss the cow from our kingdom of friendship and will ask you not to write me again at Camp Beauregard, as we leave tomorrow or next day. I am coming back to the good old U. S. A. though, you may bet on that. And when I get back I want to spend a week with you and argue the reason that I am an infidel (?). I hope you will welcome me as a friend, which I'm sure you will if you haven't married some student of bugology who has three butterflies, one dragon fly, a bald head and an absent mind—in which event you can readily see that you would have to do his thinking for him, as well as filling his alcohol bottles, pressing his specimens, putting his pipe and slippers away where they could not be found in the evening, and keeping him from catching hornets instead of the more harmless germs. But if you're looking for a husband I hope you will never hop one of that type. And as to my marrying a French girl I will say that I patronize only home industry.

Sis, I'll write you again soon. In fact, you may expect to be bothered with letters from me at close intervals, for I would think of discontinuing writing to you as soon as I would think of breaking my oath to our country. If I stop writing, just watch the casualty list.

Bye bye. With lots of love, I am yours for a long time yet.

Big Bro. Bob.

Somewhere in France.

Aug 20, 1918.

Dear Big Sis:

We had an excellent trip across, but the sea was growing monotonous when we sighted terra cotta. Yes indeed, that smile had just about worn out when we landed on the coast of France. But we chased ourselves out through a moss covered, natural stone burg; and when I saw all the French mademoiselles I set down a barrage of smiles that would melt the heart of a Memphis policeman.

I have often told you that the U. S. A. is the only country to live in. Every time I get out of it I become more strongly convinced that I have all the argument my way. The prettiest thing I ever saw was the U. S. Flag hanging on a broomstick over the American Consul's office in Chili. The most beautiful thing we have over here is the U. S. Flag and the memory of the land that God has blessed.

Now listen, Hatefulness, please snap out with a long, foolish letter and don't be long about it either.

With love, I am

Bob.

At home in Tennessee.

Sept. 17th.

Dear Big Brother:

Your dog-gon'd welcome letter received today. Was just beginning to wonder whether Bob was ever going to show up again. But of course I can't expect to hear from you as often now as when you were in Dixie Land.

And you request me to send in reply a long, foolish letter. Now I think I can readily gratify your request as far as the former adjective is concerned, but am very sorry to be unable to accommodate you by sending anything savoring of foolishness for I want to assure you that my days of foolishness have long ago been relegated to the past and have become only a memory. Now when I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I looked like a child and acted like a child; but since I became a woman I have put away childish things, and the thought of anything except the serious and solemncholy is far beneath the dignity of my years. Of course you can't understand and appreciate it now, but after you have plodded past as many milestones as I have you will then realize that foolishness, frivolity and fun are not to be tolerated by persons of such mature years. So let me admonish you to be exceedingly careful in the future and never, under any circumstances, mention the word "foolishness" to me again, for I long ago passed beyond that stage of the game.

Was awfully sorry you didn't get a furlough before going across, as I was anxious to have you come and spend a few days in our little burg. I had planned a nice trip to the country for you, where you could enjoy for awhile the odor of the forest, the dew of the meadow and the song of the morning, together with some nice fried rats and cold buttermilk.

But you say you're coming some day if I don't get married! Now I don't think there's the remotest probability of my having this question propounded to me very soon,—“Do you promise”—etc.—“till death?” No, child, I assure you that nothing is farther from my mind than matrimony.

Now don't understand me to be decrying marriage for I'm not. I believe that an ideal marriage is the happiest state on earth for man or woman. But honey, how many ideals ones do you find? Very few, I'm afraid; and for that very reason it is with fear and trembling that I have always considered the question, “To wed or not to wed?” One night I had the funniest dream, which is a very good illustration of the way I feel about it. I dreamed that the wedding guests had assembled in the church and my betrothed and I were sauntering up the two aisles and had almost reached the flowery arch from which the wedding bells were hanging, when suddenly I became possessed with one of my “fear and trembling” attacks. I turned 'round, ran from the church as fast as I could and didn't stop till I had reached a forest and hid in a hollow tree! I was just debating whether

to stay in the tree till I starved to death, or whether to creep out after a few days and try to face the world again, when I awoke.

Now you know the Bible says "No marriages in heaven!" Guess it's 'cause they haven't been a howling success on earth? Why, even Mother Eve's marriage did not continue ideal; for the first time the devil came 'round she subjected herself to criticism throughout all the ages by listening to his voice. But pore woman, I guess she got so tired hearing nobody's voice 'cept Adam's that even the devil was welcome. "Variety the spice of life" even in her day!

Now you mustn't be too dead sure that you're not going to fall captive to one of the little foreign girls; for let me quote you the following from good authority:- "If there is one thing more uncertain even than the verdict of a jury—if there is one thing which is known neither in heaven, earth, nor hell, and which angels and demons alike waste time in guessing at, it is what style of woman any man will fancy and select for his wife. It is utterly impossible to predict what matrimonial caprice may or may not seize even the wisest, most experienced, most practical and reasonable of men; and I would sooner undertake to conjecture how high the thermometer stands at this instant on the crest of Mt. Copernicus up yonder in the moon, than attempt to guess what freak will decide a man's choice of a bride." So now!

In a day or two I'll send you a little book—"What is Worth While?"—which I believe you will enjoy,

especially as you're an infidel. No, honey, you and I are not going to argue the question of your infidelity for I think that I, too, am an "infidel" in the same sense that you are. Kid, you're truly a freak of nature, for you've got a three-score-and-ten-year-old mind stuffed into a one-score-and-four-year-old head! Where did you come from anyhow? And, of still more consequence, *whither are you going?* I hope that after about three score and sixteen more years you're going to heaven; though of course if you do I'll have to go elsewhere for it would never do for us to land at the same place, as we'd do nothing but throw lemons at each other and cause horror among the holy inhabitants—or, in other words, we'd *raise h—!* (Now that "h—" stands for *habitual discord*.)

Well, I'll write you again soon—not because I 'specially want to, but because I just naturally love to do things for spite. And you must write this big sis as often as you can, even if it's only a post card, for I'll now be doubly anxious to know that all is well with you.

Lovingly,

"Hatefulness."

(That's a cracker-jack name you've given me. But rats!—*what's in a name?*)

Somewhere in France

Sept. 10th.

Ma Chere Big Sis:

I do not have an opportunity to fuss with you as often as I would like, but am going to start a letter to you this morning. Am sending you a few post cards which I hope you will receive O. K.

This is a great country. We have some beautiful scenery here,—scenery of various types. If you care to see any very old moss-covered stone buildings and walls you can find them right here. Some of them are as old as the story the Major told us last night.

Then there's another brand of scenery that is not so old, but really better to look upon. It is not by any means stationary,—in fact, very portable—or maybe “self-propelled” would be a better word. Anyhow this latter type of scenery goes tripping down the cobble-stone street, casting goose-berry eyes at the different American soldiers who have a French vocabulary of more than one and one-half words. (That leaves me out by exactly one word.) This scenery hails the khaki-clad hero, hoping to mooch a cigarette for herself. Then when he pulls out a package she happens to remember that her sister smokes—then her brothers—then mamma—then

papa—then *etc.* So to save time, it is advisable to give her the package and bid her *au revoir*.

And it's also time for me to bid *you* *au revoir*.

Unmistakably yours,

Bob.

Sept. 20th.

Hello Sis:- Is the world treating you O. K. now? It is treating me about as often as usual.

Bob.

Somewhere in France.

Oct. 12th, 1918.

Dear Big Sis:

I received a letter from you today, dated Sept. 17th, and was exceedingly glad to get it for I was beginning to get homesick for a letter from you. I'll write you every opportunity I have but of course it won't be as often as when I used to parade in full pack back in the Only Land that is worth fussing over.

Now I must say that you show rare judgment on the question of matrimony. It seems to me that it is a word that is usually accented on the last syllable—*mon(e)y*. But of course I have no right to criticise the battles of life with daughter of Eve for a "file leader." I call the woman the "file leader" because the man usually drills in the "rear rank" after Sergeant Preacher says, "Forward—March!"

Now the "spice of life" of which you speak often causes the divorce court to signal "As skirmishers" and forgets to blow "Assembly." However I'm raving about something that I couldn't qualify as first class private in. I used to think it the only thing, but now I stroke my jaw and ponder. I may change my mind; I may not. But if I ever do decide to wreck a woman's life she will have "Made in U. S. A." branded all over her.

Well, Dee, I must close. Please write me often, and send me some of Service's poems even if you have to send a page at a time.

Your own pal,

Big Brother.

Oct. 18th.

Dear Big Sis:

This is just to inform you that I am O. K. and hope you are too. But—I'm looking for another letter from you.

Lovingly,

Bob.

Oct. 27th.

My Big Sis:

You should be ashamed of yourself—get me off over here and then forget to write to me. *And my best friend too!* I am speaking of lady friends, understand; for when you have a pal that hangs with you through it all,—mud, filth, shrapnel, gas, and machine-gun bullets, then you have *a friend*.

Now I presume that if I should get caught in a shower of machine-gun bullets without an umbrella you would still ignore me entirely! But no offense for of course you are busy, else you would have a letter over here to me so long that it would make "Ten Nights in a Bar-Room" look like a ten word cablegram. But I want you to write to me as often as you can. I am still O. K. and very busy.

Unanimously yours,

Bob.

Somewhere in France.

Oct. 30, 1918.

Dear Vee Dee:

I seat myself on pen with box in hand to prove to you that there are more uses for an ink bottle than there are for the wrinkles on raisins.

I am laid up today on the bad-order list but hope to be out soon. I hope you are enjoying yourself as well as I am, for, between you and me, I am sure suffering untold joy. In fact, I had about as soon be in France as to be in Fort Leavenworth or Sing Sing prisons. Oh, Dee, this is a fine country to live in—if you don't care to live very long.

Listen here, you rat-eating rascal, some of these days I am going to eat too much corned-beef and die if you don't pull out of your Rip Van Winkle act and write me some peace terms. I'll bet there is some bugologist hanging around there and you are pressing out butterflies and trying to remember where he lost his hat and when his alcohol bottle was filled. Now if that is the brand of D. S. O. you are paying homage to, then snap out of it, get your head and eyes off the ground, straighten up your rifle and get into (dam this pen!) action with a nice long letter. Sherman was right, I think, when he pulled off that famous expression of his. He was trying to write some friend with a pen like this one.

Well, as I have written you ninety two times and have heard from you but once, I will close.

Disgustedly yours,

Bob.

P. S. Did you receive the post cards I sent you?—
huh?

T——, Tennessee.

Nov. 29, 1918.

Dog-gone the luck! Here I've been sending you letters and post cards galore and still you keep landing on me every few days about not writing. Then all at once I quit hearing from you. No, I haven't had a line since your letter dated Oct. 30th. There was some hard fighting in November and it makes me wonder how it is with my dear pal. In your last letter you spoke of being on the bad-order list. Now that doesn't sound at all good to me and I'm anxiously awaiting later news. So please drop me a card, if nothing more, and let me know about yourself.

Say, did you receive the little collection of Service's poems I sent you? Also did you get the "What is Worth While" book? I kinder doubt whether you received it for I mailed it while away on a case. Then after I came home I wanted to send you some cigars but the postmaster refused to take them,—said they were not allowed to accept any packages to France without a permit from an officer. I told him about mailing the little book while away, and he said, "Well, I'm confident that he did not receive it." I thought, "Oh, the ——!"

Well, I suppose ole Uncle Sam is a pretty wise guy in many respects, but when it comes to putting on so much red tape about sending things to our Big

Brothers it makes me want to resort to the kind of language that you used about your pen.

And then to think that I can't even send you a Xmas package! I put in a "nearest relative" plea—but nothin' doin',—they wouldn't let me have a box. You know the packages must all go through the Red Cross; no soldier can receive more than one package and that must be from his nearest relative. So I suppose your Memphis sister will have the pleasure of preparing your Xmas box. *Lucky sister!*

I simply think it the dickens that I can't send you something. Anyhow I'm slipping a little brown handkerchief in with this letter. And yet how do I know but that it will be scratched out before it reaches you—by one of those pesky censors who poke their noses into everything.

(Now look here, Mr. Censor, if the cap fits you, wear it—for if you're butting into my handkerchief and my love-letters to Big Brother then I want to say that you are the nerviest guy that ever landed on French soil; and I hope you won't receive a single Xmas box, unless it's a box on the ears from Big Brother. So now!)

Say, kid, I have a book that I want to send you; so please send me that permit from the proper officer. Have him fix it so that big sis can send you whatever she dog-goned pleases.

Gee, I'm resorting to a lot of slang tonight. Don't know what's the matter, for it's the first time in all my life that I ever indulged in expressions anywhere

in the neighborhood of slang. Truly war is demoralizing!

I guess you've heard of the terrible epidemic of Spanish influenza which has swept over the U. S. The death rate has been fearful. I offered my services to nurse it in the camps but just as I was ready to go, circumstances interfered. So I stayed home and nursed it, also nursed some pneumonia cases.

If this makes good connection it should reach you about Christmas time. But if it takes as long a rest as some of the others, then it may not find you until after you've returned to U. S. A. And by the way, you may be en route for home now for all I know. Wouldn't that be great? Just let us know when you expect to strike Dixie Land, so's we can kill the fatted rat.

Now, old boy, if you're still on earth please drop me a line right away. And if you're in heaven then send us a message on the sly,—perhaps by way of a sunbeam—or a star-twinkle—or—well, perhaps 'twould suit you better to send it by a thunder-clap!

Bye bye. I am still your loving

Big Sis.

Dec. 10, 1918.

Sergeant Bee O. Bee

In account with

Vee Dee Ess

To letters and post cards galore

Amt. due—An answer to each.

As I am greatly pressed by my creditors I am compelled to appeal to those who are indebted to me—please remit at once and save trouble and expense.

V. D. Ess.

Dec. 22nd, 1918.

Dearie:

Diurnally do I deliberate as to your delinquency in deigning to disclose to your dismal damsel your reason for the duration of this deplorable silence.

Decorum demands that I discontinue my demonstrations of dementia, but my daring disposition derides and defies decorum and I do dauntlessly declare unto you my delirious desire to be no longer denied the delectation with which some of your dialect would decorate me.

Continued deprivation will doubtless drive me to the d——!

Devotedly,

Dec.

Jan. 15th, 1919.

Dear Bob:

Do you know that the last letter I've had from you was dated October 30th! I've been watching the casualty list, but thank goodness haven't run across your name on it yet; however the long lists keep coming in each day and it makes me fearful that your name may find a place on it yet, for there was *some* fighting after October 30th—and how do I know but that my Big Brother went down at the last. Gee, but that was a long sentence!—hope *it* didn't take your breath.

"To resume," as the pickaninny said to the watermelon, I'm just trusting that you've written since the war closed and that the mail has been delayed. But today I wrote your sister in Memphis, asking her the latest news of you,—for I don't propose to have you lying wounded or perhaps in your soldier's grave "Over There" with my knowing nothing about it. So now!

Yes, I want to know whether you're on earth or in heaven; 'cause if you're on earth I want to send you a dozen pages of my good-for-nothing earth thoughts. But if you're in heaven—ah! if you're in heaven then look around and see if there's a little hut prepared for

Big Sis.

Somewhere Besides Home.

Jan. 15, 1919.

Dear Sis Dee:

I have in my pocket thirty-five centimes in French money, and I will make my will, leaving my entire estate to you, if you will snap out of it and write me a nice long letter. I have about decided you are a pretty bum pal when it comes to sticking, as I have written you several times from different parts of Europe; but when it comes to receiving I am nil for I have had only one letter from you since I landed in France,—nearly six months ago. Sis, you know that is no way to treat a good pal.

Now of course if we had been playing the role of sweethearts and had been writing silly love letters I would not be surprised that you had grown tired of the correspondence; for sweethearts come and sweethearts go, but—well, real pals are *supposed* to stick forever.

Perhaps you have written and I have failed to receive it for our mail does have a hard time finding us, especially a casual after he gets cut off from his organization. And I have been a casual, subject to transfer at a moment's notice, for so long—well, since Nov. 1st, 1918. I just came crawling out of the hospital when the armistice was signed.

I wish I could run across some one that I knew in the States. And I haven't received a single letter since Nov. 5th. Now can you beat that? So Sis, please open up your jug of wisdom and pour me a glass of information concerning the *why for* I do not hear from you as I should. Do you not write or is it the mail service—or both?

Well, I will close.

Your pal,
Bob.

Feb. 10th.

Dear Bro. Bob:

Your "knock-down and drag-out" letter dated Jan. 15th just received. Now if I were a sis who was up on cuss-words I'd sure say something awful about such luck—for I've written you several long letters besides sending numerous post cards, etc. Have you not received my Xmas letter? If not, then I'm gonna throw up my mitts and cut your acquaintance until you return to a civilized world. Now you can just proceed to get it out o' your head that I'm a bum pal, for it's the bum mail service that is responsible for your not hearing from me.

After receiving your letter this morning I went to the telegraph office and had the operator figger on the cost of a cable message like this to you—"Sorry you haven't received letters. Have written often. Will try again." When he announced that it would be only \$9.04 I took a lonesome \$10 bill (my last penny in all the world) from my purse and was just preparing to bid it bye-bye when the operator began to smile. I said, "What you laughing at?" He said, "I was just wondering." Sez I, "Yes, you're wondering whether I'm going to be fool enough to blow in my last ten on this message—and I sho' am if you can guarantee it to be delivered."

Responded he,
"No guarantee."

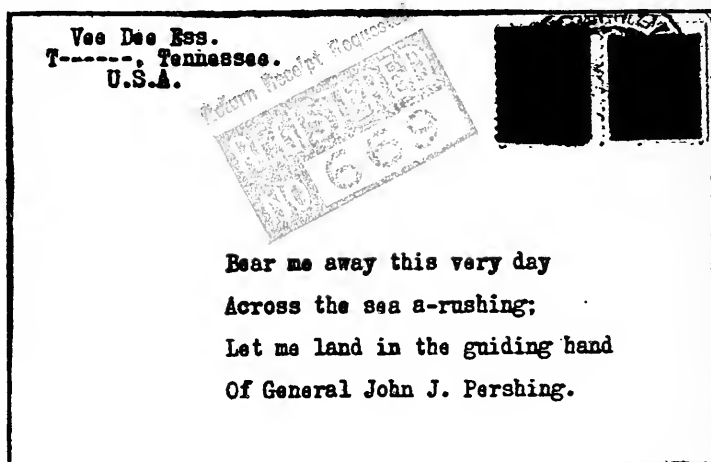
Then said I, "Nothin' doin'—I'll just go and blow it in for chewin'-gum." He looked down at my shoes and said, "Or perhaps for a pair of shoes." I said, "Rats! I'd rather have gum to chew than shoes to wear—good bye." So I sauntered out and—well, I'm inclosing you a chew o' the gum.

Yes, if I could have had any assurance that the message would have reached you I sure would have sent it. Of course it *was* mighty little sugar for a dime, but who cares a rap for that as long as it's in behalf of a pal like you! I don't expect anything else but to land in the pore-house some day, and while I'm on my way I suppose you'd just as well get the benefit of a few of my dimes as anybody else.

I've been awfully worried about you lately, for the letter I received from you today is the first I've had since October 30th. So a few weeks ago I sat me down and wrote to your sister, asking her about you. And, by the way, she played the dickens letting me know—for I'm still waiting for a reply. So you know I sure was glad to get your letter today; and I hope you will continue letting me hear from you as often as you can.

Will write you again soon. With much love, I am still

Your pal,
Big Sis.



T——, Tennessee.

Feb. 24th, 1919.

I salute you, General Pershing!—Now I'm ready to ask the favor; for considering the fact that you're a gentleman of leisure with nothing of any importance to occupy your mind, of course you'll be tickled to death to have me send you on an errand,—so here goes.

I've got a pesky little adopted brown-eyed brother (at least he says his eyes are brown, though I've never yet had a chance to look into 'em) who has been "Over There" for six months. I've heard from him often during that time and though I have retaliated by sending him frequent letters he has received only one of them, and that was written last September.

He promises to will me his entire estate of thirty-five centimes if I'll snap out of my Rip Van Winkle act and write him a letter.

Now I'm tired o' burning the midnight oil manufacturing enchanting epistles for his edification and then never having him lay eyes on 'em—or, in other words, I'm weary of "wasting my sweetness on the desert air;" therefore if you'll use your influence in assisting the inclosed letter to reach him I'll go halves with you on the estate which he has promised to leave me. What more striking guarantee of my deep earnestness in this matter could be given?

Last August he went across with Co. E, 153rd Inf.; but the last address he sent (Jan. 15th) was

Sergt. Bee O. Bee,

A. P. O. 705 Casual Det., A. T. S.

Bassens, France.

Last November's issue of "The World's Work" makes you responsible for the following quotation,—
"Each person should do each day the thing that comes to him or her to the very best of his or her ability." Now I've done my very levelest in trying to induce you to help my letter find Sergt. Bee, and I shall expect you in turn to practice what you preach and accomplish the thing whereunto I send you to the very best of your ability; for I cannot emphasize too strongly my belief that a couple o' broken hearts

is in prospect unless you promptly and decisively act to avert it.

Now honest Injun, General Pershing, I do hate for my little soldier friend to be laboring under the erroneous impression that his very best pal has gone clear back on him; and it will be a great favor to me if you'll look him up, put the proper address on the inclosed letter and mail it to him.

Thanking you in advance for your kindness and hoping that you shall some day be so fortunate as to have the honor of smoking cigars with Sergt. Bee,

I am truly,

(Miss) Vee Dee Ess.

Feb. 24th, 1919.

Bobbie, pal, today I send
A line to General Pershing,
Inclose this note and ask him please
To send to you a-rushing.

Yes, I'm about to throw a spasm on account of your failing to receive the mail I send you, for I have had repeated letters and cards from you saying that you had received only one letter from me since you landed "Over there." Yesterday another card comes, and without your address on it, assuring me that although you do not hear from me you are still holding no grudge against me.

Now listen here, Bobbie Boy, it isn't my fault that you do not hear from this big sis, for I've written you more letters than you could count in a week and I can't understand why they have not reached you. So I thought I'd send this one to Headquarters and ask him in the name o' goodness to direct and mail it to you if he knew where to find you.

Yes, honey, I'd be tickled to death to write you two or three times a day if you'd stay in one place long enough to get 'em. But who wants to waste so much sweetness on fifteen or twenty page letters and then have you run away and leave 'em in the lurch before they even have time to get there. Now that's a nice way to treat Big Sis's letters!

At one time I was awfully up in the air about you for I didn't hear from you for about three months

and was becoming woefully apprehensive! Yes, I was afraid you had bidden this vain world good-bye, therefore all joy hastened to foresake the chambers of my soul and I was just preparing to write a little "In Memoriam" poem entitled "To Bobbie in Heaven—or Elsewhere," when here came a very much alive and very much welcome letter from you, pronouncing maledictions upon your not guilty Big Sis because she hadn't written you,—when in fact she had been doing her levelest to keep you well supplied with her adorable letters. Now ain't you sorry? But I'll forgive you provided you'll hurry up and come on back home where we can throw lemons with some degree of certainty of their hitting the mark; for it's an awfully unsatisfactory shot with an ocean between us, especially with you on the jump all the time. (I never could shoot a bird on the wing!) So I don't see any other alternative except for you to

Grab your grip and hustle
Across the miles of space,
Have these months of absence
No longer in the race;
And then—ye gods have mercy!—
We'll see each other's face.

Bye-Bye, old boy. Keep me informed of your address and I'll continue sending you letters, hoping that this mail service will get off the bum by and by.

Your pal,
Big Sis.

March 1st.

Say, Bob, this morning I received the little book—"What is Worth While?"—that I mailed you last September. It had been forwarded to you at different places in Europe, but was finally marked "Uncalled for" and returned to me. Am making another effort to get it to you.

Big Sis.

Right Here.

Feb. 28th.

My dear Big Sis:

At last it has happened! Yes, I have a real, genuine, unadulterated letter from you dated Feb. 10th. Vee Dee, you always were a wonder! Just as I was regaining my senses from five days' fever at a temperature of 105° and had got all the green snakes, beautiful roses, blue spotted lizards and sea-poppies chased off my bed, the nurse comes 'round with a smile and a letter from Big Sis. If I hadn't received that letter I would not have been out of bed yet. Honey, please don't ever have pneumonia in more than one lung at a time, 'cause it's unhealthy.

I wrote you two or three dozen letters, more or less, before I went to the hospital and I know I got real sarcastic in some of them but I also know that it's O. K. with you, 'cause you're my pal; and a real pal takes the cussin' and lets it go at that—for of course neither of us are saints nor anger proof.

Now with sweethearts it's a different proposition; for when either of them thinks that the other *might have* intended to speak sarcastic, then look out! Did you ever notice it? Yes, the hero can tell his queen that her cheeks are as red as a rose, and she looks as happy as a rookie that has just busted a crap game. But that hero fools 'round and by some mistake in different vegetable plants, he says, "Darling, your

face is as red as a beet!" Goodness, sis, then is when things begin to happen! It gets just as quiet 'round there as an allied drive on the western front and about as safe as a German machine-gun emplacement. Funny, ain't it?

I am getting anxious to come on that visit to you for I feel like you are the only pal I have left. You see old Crox and Harrod have gone on the Big Drive to the Golden Gate and it leaves me feeling like an orphan. I get pretty blue at times but I wander off down to the shore and smell the sea awhile. Then I want to feel the roll of the ship, the sting of the spray and the taste of the sea air. In other words, I want to hit the last trail; that trail we all love—the old trail back home.

Well, sis, I must close and go to bed. I am still pretty weak. Write to your

Big Brother.

Still Here.

March 6th.

My dear Pal:

I can't wait till I hear from you before I write again. I don't think you would approve of it anyway.

I am feeling fine after my trip to the hospital and my dose of pneumonia. I imagine the nurse giving me a smile now and then helped me as much as anything else.

I was strolling down by the shore last evening. There was a little moon and you could see black triangles specking the horizon,—little sail boats floating with the inland wind, and now and then the hoarse whistle of a tug; then the rattle of chains as some big steamer weighed anchor to start her voyage—*where?* What flag was she flying? It was too dark for me to decide. Perhaps she was bound for the land we love. Now when we stop to think about it the world is a small place after all; but when you get stationed indefinitely in a port with three thousand miles of water between you and home then it seems to be a great big world.

Sis, I am going to keep my promise and come to see you as soon as I return to good old U. S. A. I am guessing at the welcome. But even if I am not welcome I shall stay in your town at least one week; for you are silly if you think I have become possessed

with wanderlust to such a degree that I cannot remain in one town one week.

I am sorry that I have not received your letters, especially the one you wrote 'long 'bout Christmas time. You can't guess what I received Christmas. A nice mess-gear full of beans for dinner. In the afternoon I strolled out to explore an old cave where Napoleon and other noted warriors had housed some of their troops on their various campaigns. I became so interested in historic and aristocratic conditions that I forgot my six o'clock mess call, therefore I didn't get any supper on that muddy Christmas day. But I guess we doughboys can recall times when we had more to worry about than missing a meal.

Now I guess it's time to blow "Recall" on this letter.

Undeniably yours,

Bob.

P. S. I don't understand why Sister did not answer your letter. I'll have to jack her up about it.

April 4th.

Dear little Orphan:

Yes, I know you do feel all alone since your best pals are gone. Dear old Crox!—I mentally bring some flowers, and standing beside his grave in Flanders field I scatter them from the head to the foot, for it was indirectly through him that I found you.

Our khaki-clad boys!—dying that the Iron Lady may live!

Will write you at length in a few days.

Lovingly,

Big Sis.

RETURN RECEIPT.

Received from the Postmaster the Registered or Insured Article, the original number of which appears on the face of this Card.

Gen John J. Pershing

(Signature of name of addressee.)

Charles S. Conrad, Jr.

(Signature of addressee's agent.)

Date of delivery,

Mar 19, 191*9*

Form 3811

08-6116

April 7, 1919.

Dear Bobbie:

I have before me two letters which I received from you a few days ago and which I will try to answer after some sort of a fashion—my usual fashion I suppose!

Now in the first place I want to tell you that I gave you credit for having better judgment than to accept even a single, much less a double, dose of pneumonia. If you were determined to try it, then why didn't you postpone it till you returned home so I could show you what a cracker-jack nurse I am? But if that was longer than you cared to wait, then why in the name o' goodness didn't you have your nurse write and tell me that you were sick? I sure would have sent some "S. O. S. my little Pal" messages up to heaven in your behalf. Well, I'm glad you pulled through even if I didn't get a chance to worry myself to death about it.

But never mind, I'll get even with you yet; for by all the laws, both of nature and of common sense, I'm due to "go west" ahead o' you, and I'm not going to let you know when I get sick,—not even if I'm at the very pin-point of death! And more than that, you'll not even be invited to attend the funeral! Now see what you'll miss,—'cause I'm planning to have a service which shall be conducted according to my own individual wishes and ideas.

(Then won't it be a peach?) Now I'm not joking about that, for really and truly I have always said that I was going to manufacture my own service. What I mean by that is that I'm going to write my own sermon and have it read by some friend at my grave. I don't want no preachers buttin' in, 'cause preachers and I don't gee very well and they might decide to take out their spite on me by telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, therefore I'll fix the thing exactly to suit myself. What do you think about it? But of course your opinion is neutral, since you're not going to be invited to hear me give myself the final send off!

After informing me that you had had pneumonia you drifted along in your letter until you made this erroneous statement, "Neither of us are saints nor anger proof." Now I'd like to inquire what reason I've ever given you for believing that I'm anything short of a saint! I had determined to write myself up as such in the aforementioned sermon, and here you come along and try to throw cold H₂O on my plans! I'm also at a loss to understand your reason for imagining that I could possibly, under any circumstances, be induced to become anywhere in the neighborhood of ruffled in **temper**!

Then you drift along a little farther and criticise the fair sex for preferring that the unfair sex tell them that their cheeks are like roses rather than beets. Gee, right there you struck the keynote to why you and I have never been able to get along to-

gether; for you have positively, persistently, and everlastingly refused to say something on the order of this to me,—“Big Sis, I’ve never seen you but I know from the tone of your letters that your eyes are twin stars, your cheeks are as the peach blossom, your teeth are pearls, your lips rosebuds, and your voice is sweetest music.” Now I’ve tried my dar— (I started to say *darndest*, but I won’t) to induce you to express yourself after some such poetical fashion to me; though if you should honestly attempt such a feat it would be just like you to make a miscue and get it this way,—“Big Sis, I’m haunted with visions of your crossed eyes, your freckled cheeks, your false teeth, chapped lips, and screech-owl voice.” Yes, that would sound more like you, for the only compliment you ever handed me was to liken me unto that long-eared animule, “Dear Kate.” Of course that was better than nothing—but—well, as you’re my own dear pal I guess I’ll have to skuze your sins, both of omission and of commission, minus a condition which forbids repetition. So just come on with yer rat killin’ and I’ll just continue to adore you whichever way you strike.

But in spite of all your faults, when the opportunity presents itself you must be certain not to refuse to start back to your ain countrie, and when you get here just make a beeline to my mess hall where I’ll have a nice fresh sandwich awaiting you. Yes, you must spend a week with us. In fact, I think you’ll have to spend two or three after devouring the

sandwich—though it didn't have such an effect upon that *Other Party*, for he bade me an unfond bye-bye almost before it had time to reach the cardiac end of his esophagus.

No, honey, don't say anything to your sister about not writing to me, for I'm going to Memphis soon and will attend to it—*see if I don't!* But she is not the only one who has handed me the cold shoulder, for I haven't received a line from General Pershing in reply to an important letter that I recently sent him. I know he got it because I have the return receipt. Now I can excuse your sister for not writing, for doubtless she is busy, but General Pershing has no earthly excuse for delaying to send me a ten page letter. If he persists in failing to do so and should ever run for President of the U. S. I shall certainly use my influence in getting him defeated. So he'd better mind who he's snubbin'. And if *you* ever neglect me in any such fashion I shall positively refuse to be the bride at your weddin'. So good-bye!

Big Sis.

Office of
Bee O. Bee.
Dealer in

DISCARDED DREAMS — WORTHLESS IDEAS
and SECOND HAND LOVE AFFAIRS

Miss-Takes (Sec.) Miss-Haps (Treas.)
Miss-Fortune (Business Mgr.)

Somewhere in this God-forsaken Country.

March 26th.

Big Sis, I am greatly in favor of looking over a passenger list that looks favorable; for when the rumor comes 'round that we are likely, apt, or more than likely to get on the passenger list between now and May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec., or 1920, then I make up my mind that I'm a lucky dog—for all the time I am wanting to, desirous of, or am suffering with a desire to manage, contrive, discover or figger out a way (just any d— way) to get on the beforementioned passenger list.

One of these days I shall get there, arrive, or make a visit at your castle, home, chateau, domicile, or mansion just to show you that I am capable of surviving a whole war by myself.

I am feeling fine, O. K., and in good health. If I felt any better I don't think I could survive.

We are not bothered with dust in this country. But just wait till our friend, Miss Summertime, comes 'round and I'll bet a yankee dime that we'll be praying for just one little shower to sorter take the rocks and dust out of the air. Thank heaven we don't have to kill the beautiful Dutch in this ding-busted weather. All we have to do is to criticise the officers who are above us.

But probably I had better stop this noisy noise.

Yours till I lose my Service Record.

Bob.

875th Co. Trans. Corps.
A. T. S. Camp A. P. O. 705.
Base Section No. 2.
2nd G. D.
Bassens,
France.
Eastern Hemisphere.
Earth.
March 31st, A. D. 1919.

Ma Chere:

Just to show you that you are not half forgotten in this land of the Ancients I will try to run you out a few lines in behalf of all concerned, which includes the whole world,—even the beautiful mermaids that inhabit the Atlantic, Pacific, Arctic, Antarctic and the Indian Oceans, as well as the seven Seas.

But the fair mermaids in the Atlantic are the ones that I have particular reference to. Sh-h-h-h- (this is all whisper stuff). I think those little beauties are stealing my mail. You well know that the mermaids are all wild about me and are very jealous about the letters that I receive from other girls. So this is what I think has happened. The little girl with the long slimy fish tail heard that a letter was coming to me, so she rushes over to the ship and makes eyes at the sailor boy (all sailor boys love the mermaids) and tells him that she wants the letters that are on there for me. She takes them down to her home.

She is fond of me because I used to sit up at night and talk to her over the rail of the ship and because I never mistreated her little friends, the flying fish, the dragon fly and the sea gulls. I told her beautiful stories about the high mountains and the green valleys with the daisies blooming therein. She is fond of my stories and is weeping for me to come back to see her again. And, between you and me, I think that the reason the sea is so salty.

You well know the story of the wonderful mill that is still grinding out "salt, salt, nothing but salt." Now that's what THEY say. But you can't fool me. That mill is worn out long ago. What makes that blooming sea so salty is the fact that all those mermaids are out there weeping for me to come back and see them. Nope, you can't fool me. Why chile, I wasn't twenty one years old till I was noticing things!

Hoping you will find time to think of me now and then I will pipe down for the time being.

Your loving brother,

Bob.

Same Place—different date.

My dear Big Sis:

I have just received the wonderful little book—"What is Worth While?"—that you sent me back yonder in Sept. 1918. After bouncing back and forth between the two hemispheres she at last bumps into me headlong. And a great book it is! I am especially pleased with the passages that you have underlined. But Sis, I'm getting anxious for some more letters from you for there is no book that appeals to me like the writings of a real live friend.

Say, sis, I've run across a new pal—a reprobate by the name of O. H. Harvey. He is indeed a wonderful fellow. I am going to invite him to call 'round with me when we get home for I want you to know him. And I want to tell you that they can't get me back to the land that God built one minute too soon. Neither can I meet my Big Sis a minute too soon. I am under the impresson that I shall be a welcome visitor,—that is if we are as good friends as we seem. I think I know my big sis. I may be disappointed, but not this time for I would gamble on my Pal to the last.

I would like for us to wander off to the violets and poppies all by our lonesome and talk it over by ourselves. I often wander away and talk to the pretty sea poppies—beautiful yellow sea poppies. I ask them if this or that is true. They nod their heads

yes or no. The sea poppy is a wonderful thing to answer all questions just as the tide is going out and the beautiful day is dying.

Well Sis, I must close and go to bunk. Your pal is homesick. Write soon, and remember to love your

Big Brother.

April 23rd.

Bless your dear little homesick heart! Guess Big Sis will have to play real porely and call you home,—’cause they’ll let you off if any of your family gets sick, won’t they? Yes, they’d let you off like the Red Cross let me have a box to send you Xmas—for I put in a “nearest relative” oath, and do you know they had the audacity to disbelieve me though I offered to swear it on a stack o’ Byrons!

Yes, I was crazy to send you one of those boxes. Bet you couldn’t guess in a month o’ rainy days what I was going to put in it! But never mind, I’ll fix you next Christmas,—that is, if we manage to stay on speaking terms till then. You see I’ve already explained to you that pals and I don’t hang together long; for though I always try my “dar—” to keep ’em in a good humor, they invariably hunt ’round till they manage to find something to go up the spout about. Then it’s “Good bye my honey, I’m gone!” Gee, I was simply raised on that song—have had it sung to me by more Dear Departing Pals than I can shake a stick at. Now ain’t I lucky not to be married—for if I had a husband I’d be scared to death all the time for fear that he, too, might spring that song on me!

Now this is an honest-to-goodness dream I had a few nights ago. I dreamed that on the impulse of the moment I got married, and about ten minutes after the ceremony I sat me down to write you a long

letter. In comes Mr. Husband and asks who I'm writing to. I tells him I'm writin' to the dandiest pal this side o' Hades. He immediately goes straight up in the air and tells me I shan't write to you. So I ups and tells him he can just git his walkin'-papers ready, for I wouldn't give up writing to my Big Bro. for all the husbands in heaven, earth, or down yonder. Then I awake just as he starts the familiar tune, "Bye-bye, my Honey, I'm gone."

Not changing the tune, but I'm glad you enjoyed the little book. Not many boys of your age would care a rap for a book like that; but I knew it was one that you could understand and appreciate. And yet how is it that you understand so far beyond your years?—for usually we gain full understanding only after bitter experiences in life; and surely the years have not yet brought into your life the experiences from which you have learned the lessons!

Am on a case now but when I'm through with this patient will send you something else to read. Will also send you and your pal, Harvey, a box of cigars in a few days. Yes, bring him 'round when you come to see me—'specially if he's a reprobate, 'cause reprobates and I get along swimmingly together. Will be tickled clear down to the ground to see both of you—with especial emphasis on the *you*.

Now, honey, I'll bid you goodnight.

Lovingly your

Big Sis.

May 10th.

"All things come to him who waits." I have waited a long time to find out why you have sassed me in every letter for one whole year and then some! Now your letter of April 7th explains it clearly,—for I find that you have been yearning for your Romeo to tell the beautiful story; so just look timid for here goes:- *I love you.*

Yes, I have chucked lemons at the best pal in the whole land. I have called her "Big Sis" instead of "My Own Darling Girl." I have insinuated that she was only a human instead of an angel sent down from heaven on special duty or detached service. I have compared her to a noted animal with extensive ears instead of the Melo de Venus that she is.

I really deserve the fate of a fat pup in a sausage factory; however if you will intercede with the gods of Fate in my behalf that they refrain from inflicting such a punishment upon me, then I solemnly declare that never again will I be guilty of repeating such inexorably non-matrimonial inclinations—so help me Lucifer. As little as I deserve it, perhaps you will forgive me when I remind you of the tried fact that we men are oft erring, foolish and stupid when we're unconsciously verging into the pure brand of undying love that was invented by Adam and Eve, advocated by Ulysses and Circe, guaranteed by

Romeo and Juliet, and successfully operated in motion pictures.

But say, my angel of the feminine gender, I want to tell you that I have just received a letter and a handkerchief from you dated Nov. 29th. The envelope will make a good souvenir for it was in just the condition that you find it inclosed herewith. I think that is one envelope that has done its duty, so please give it a home until I come tramping back again. Have also received the duns for letters you wrote me 'long about that time.

Well, honey, I must stop for I have about eight more letters to write. Hoping to hear from you soon, I am

Everlastingly yours,

Bob.

May 28th.

Dear Everlastingly Mine:

Your heavenly love-letter just received. Wish I could do it justice but am afraid I can't as I've had so little experience in writing love-letters. In fact, I never wrote but one in all my life and I got cussed out for that. You see it happened this way:- Once upon a time in the far distant past I had a sweetheart (yes, a real live sweetheart) who ventured to write me of his undying love and devotion, and requested that I relieve his unbearable suspense at the earliest possible moment by promising to become his very own. I was crazy about him, so I sits down and tries my hand on a love-letter to him. It ran about this way,—“Got your letter about two weeks ago but haven't yet had time to consider whether I'm very desperately in love with you or not. I kinder halfway think maybe I am, but can't say for dead sure. Will figger on it soon and let you know. Please excuse pencil and also my yawning for it's getting late.” Well, do you know he wrote and told me to go to the d—! I didn't go though and am so glad I didn't, 'cause if I had I wouldn't have run across you as soon as I did. And I'm not going to attempt a love-letter to you for the simple reason that I'd hate awfully bad to refuse to go to the d—— if you told me to.

Well, what are you doing these days? And how's your pal, Harvey?—the reprobate who's going to help us eat sandwiches next summer. Give him my love and a can of corned beef.

And so you're corresponding with *eight* other girls! Gee, I think a little dickens like you is lucky to get one girl to write to him, much less all of eight! But that just shows how unequally distributed things are in this world, for here I've been living all these years and never had but one correspondent 'cept you—and he was the one who told me where to go! *'Taint fair!!*

Sis.

May 31st.

Dear Big Sis:

Just to show you that I am still in the land of the living I will try to punch you a line or two on this dog-goned old mill. I am about as handy with a type-writer as a hippopotamus is at the nimble act of catching butterflies. I tried to write you a letter with a pen but the blank, blank, blankety, blank, e pluribus unum, nux vomica, non compos mentis, beautiful pen would only scratch, that's all.

I came in from fourteen days' leave—giving France the once over—and found a nice box of El Toros also your letter of April 23rd. I recalled every time that I had ever spoken sarcastic to my Big Sis. I made the calculation that I had often, and so on—you know just how it is when we are all in a loving mood, etc.

But Sis, I'm afraid that if we had never been sarcastic—and—well, if we had been anything else than what we are we might never have cultivated the same love that we now have growing in the garden of our hearts (I have a good stand in my own garden). No, I would never have answered your first letter if it hadn't been a pretty strong "jibe"—or "get back" as we call it in the army. But I am certainly glad I did, for I have run across one character—a woman that I've learned to love above all others and there's no use arguing with myself about that.

I sure felt my importance when I found my two score and ten smokes. I had a great desire to give one Big Sis a real bear hug and tell her how essential she was to the whole world at large, and to me individually and collectively, direct and indirect, positive and negative.

The sunrise here is certainly beautiful. Miss Dawn, like Venus, steps lightly from her bath in the opalescent mists and dons her robe of brown and gold, then goes tripping 'round the horizon like a million fairy maidens dancing before Ole King Kole. Then she throws off her robe of brown and gold for one of gray and silver. While she is dancing in her radiant beauty and joy she beholds the arms of her lover—The Sun—reaching out to embrace her. But she, like a maiden in love, blushingly skips away and a new day is born. (Now see what El Toros do for me!)

Goodness, Chile, you must have been powerful sick the nite you dreamed you wuz married! Are you sure 'twernt a nitemare you had? But I'm glad you was still liking your Big Bro.

I think things are running very nicely to bring me right into your loving arms by the latter part of July. We will then get us a couple of tomahawks and go back to the Stone Age and fight it out as ladies and gentlemen should; for I see there's no use in our trying to settle this thing on paper, because in one letter you tell me you love me and in the next you

want me to explain why I'm still living. O' Cruel
Woman, you are a sweet old pal!

With lots of love, I am yours

Bob.

June 4th, 1919.

Hello Sis:

This is just to stop you from things of minor importance and let you listen to some things that are really worth while; for I am going to tell you something that will make you sit up and take notice! You see, the fellows that are returning to the U. S. A. are spouting off a whole lot about this country that is all wrong. I am going to tell you some of the redeeming features about this part of the world.

Now in England you will find fun, folly and the flu, also Westminster Abbey and Lloyd George.

In Spain we find buildings, booze and bull fights that were left over from the gladiatorial days.

Italy is an ideal place to go if you want to find something that has the stamp of approval of the ancients,—such as Caesar, Brutus, Antony, Carry Nation, and all the old boys that used to shoot craps with destiny. Their tracks are 'round there yet—not enough industry to abolish them.

Belgium consists of battle souvenirs, shell-shocked church steeples and good people.

But now we take the charming France! Her fences are hedges of beautiful rose bushes that bloom the year 'round. The drowsy river that flows by the castle of Count No-Account is overflowing with champagne and red wine. Water is used only to make rainy days and mud-holes. We all practice the

doctrine of What's the Use? There's no need of work, no need of worry, no need of nothing. No need of sleep because if we go to sleep we might get sober.

Yes, France is THERE. There is more land to the yard in France than there is to the foot in America. She raises more grapes in one year than Welch ever plowed in one day in his whole existence. Not only that, but you take her orange crops down near the Spanish border and you find more oranges on twenty acres of land than ever grew on one tree in the whole state of California. Now you think I am holding up for this country just because I'm over here, but you're all wrong again.

Listen, honey, a pesky corporal comes in here just now and chirps out the information that he wishes we would get that order that is going to give us the divine right to go home. Now can you beat that? Actually wanting to leave this land of sour wine and wooden shoes! I have never before heard of such ungratefulness. Talk about nuts!—that boy would make a pecan orchard look barren. Now just imagine your own sweet self in a heavenly place where champagne, red and white wine and French itch grow in abundance, and then along comes an ungrateful lad wanting to go home! What I think should be done with him is this:- Give him a General Court Martial and sentence him to eat two mince pies and one quart of ice cream, drink one half gallon of sweet milk and smoke fifteen of his favorite ciga-

rettes each day; and kiss the prettiest girl south of the Mason and Dixon line at least half a dozen times a day. Have him keep this up for the rest of his worthless life. I think that would make him repent of his evil way.

I hope you have not become an old married lady lately; for when you take out your morning report and write "No change," then everything is running pretty nice. But when you write "One husband attached for rations," then you have started a lifetime campaign. There is no re-enlistment pay coming. There is no end of the first enlistment. If you desire to transfer to another branch of the service you have to desert in order to do it. They say that single life is negative happiness—but—well, we'll discuss that when I get home.

Now, my Minerva, I am afraid you are sitting up waiting for this letter so I will hand it to you, kiss you g. n. and go to bed.

Yours lovingly,

Bob.

Ist Ind.

(See heading of original letter.)

Dear Miss Ess:

The foregoing was referred to me by "Yours lovingly" for approval; therefore I take the liberty to say (by indorsement hereon) that the above is heartily approved by the undersigned, and that in most instances our sentiments are in perfect har-

mony. I may add, however, that at times we differ to some extent in regard to the mademoiselles. Bob always wants the girls I get, and that leaves me without. But what worries me most is whether Mutt will ever grow as tall as Jeff.

Thanks for the smokes Bob gave me.

Harvey.

Dear Pal Bob:

I wrote you a long letter a few days ago, but here I come again—come to give you some pointers on the weather, for truly we've been having some days left over from the flood. Rain! rain! rain! But after a long day of riot and turbulence the wind has repented and calmed down; the trees have ceased to rock and tremble; the grasses stand still and hold their heads erect, and the "forget-me-nots" are blossoming up yonder.

Well, are you keeping happy these days? I hope so. In fact, I'm inclined to the belief that you refuse to allow any of your days to slip into the past without a "Happy" label on 'em. But say, dearie, wouldn't you like to do something to make me happy? Something that would bring sunshine into my heart which has long been desolate and deserted and haunted by those birds which nestle only in ruins. Something that would not only brighten my life, but which I am confident would eventually add to your own welfare and happiness. Shall I dare explain, or shall I continue silent? My heart rebels against longer silence; it cries to be relieved of this continued, this unbearable suspense. And yet it fears to speak—fears because confronted with the question, "What shall your answer be?"

Perhaps I'd better wait until I see you face to face; wait till I can read the answer from your eyes. And

yet it may be two long months before I look into those eyes! What an interminable period! How slowly Father Time creeps along! Can't you do something to hurry him up? However if disappointment is awaiting me, then would I delay his footsteps—delay them in order that I may have a bit longer to live in hope. I can't believe, though, that you're going to disappoint me,—can't believe you're going to refuse. I can't imagine your answering "NO," for such an answer would cause a hurt that would always live in my heart—and you don't want to do that, do you?

Oh Bobbie, don't you understand? Can't you divine the meaning of this? Haven't you read between the lines and learned the secret? *Who couldn't?* Yes, surely you have guessed it!

BUT—for fear that you have failed to guess correctly I'll unburden my heart and tell you what I'm driving at. It is this—Won't you please make me supremely happy by telling me what will cure "gaps" in chickens, for mine are dyin' by the dozen!

Big Sis.

June 16th.

Dear Sis:

I can heartily recommend myself to you as a specialist on gaps, for in all my vast experience with gap-infested poultry I have yet to lose my first case, and I shall be only too glad to make you supremely happy by offering suggestions which if carefully followed will bring your remaining birds back to health and happiness.

Now in order to give you a full understanding of the malady I will discuss it briefly.

Definition—Gaps is a disease especially characterized by yawning, weakness of the eyes and limbs, together with greatly exaggerated nervous symptoms.

Etiology—This is obscure. It is pre-eminently a disease of childhood. Heredity has been observed in one tenth of the cases, and a neurotic constitution seems to favor it.

Symptoms—The first symptom is invariably a frequent opening and closing of the mouth. The tongue is coated. The patient rapidly loses strength especially in the limbs. The eyes become sunken and the skin gray or ashen.

Diagnosis—This is not difficult although sometimes the disease is confounded with cholera. But the yawning on the one hand and the weak knees on the other usually make the diagnosis easy.

Treatment—As to drugs, they are of limited utility. Stimulants are indicated. Brandy is the best form of stimulant, though iced champagne may be given in small quantities often repeated. Electricity is a popular remedy, and failure with it is due to imperfect and too brief trial. Counterirritation to the spine is also beneficial. The tepid bath is entirely safe. Its temperature should be from 80° to 90° F. with gentle rubbing. Wet compresses to the limbs at night help to relieve the weak knees. Fatigue of all kinds as well as anxiety of mind should be avoided, while moderate exercise may be encouraged. The diet should consist exclusively of sorghum seed.

If the above measures fail, then a sure cure can be accomplished by bandaging the patient's mouth so he can't gap.

Truly,

Bee O. Bee, C. D. (Chicken Doctor.)

June 20, 1919.

Dear ? ? ?

A letter and a book came today from my sister in Memphis. Inside the book is a very pathetic, as well as a very significant, little note. In fact there are *several* significant things about this book. Sister said a book agent called at her home a short time ago soliciting orders. Sister gave her an order, and in a few days the book was mailed to her.

Now, in the first place, the title—"What is Worth While?"—attracted my attention. Upon looking over the book I find that the underscored passages are identically the same as the ones in the book by that title that you sent me some time ago. BUT—the most significant thing of all is the construction of the note inside, viz—"Dear Lady: Here is a little book which I want to present to you as a token of my appreciation of your order. Do you know that for two long years I've been tramping from house to house soliciting orders for this book, and you are the first person who has favored me with a promise to purchase! For this reason the firm has decided to fire me, and as I am leaving the book business I want to send you this sample copy as an evidence of my gratefulness for the only order I have ever received.

With many good wishes to you for your kindness,
and hoping you will find the book to be really worth
while,

I am truly,

Miss ex-Book Agent."

Now sister knows nothing of the lady who sent the
book, and of course I shall not tell her who the finger
points to—but—I'm just wondering,—for first you're
a Fortune Teller, then a Nurse; now a Book Agent!
WHAT NEXT???

Bob.

June 23rd, 1919.

Well, the one I received today *caps the climax!!*—a package through General Pershing's headquarters containing the communication you sent to General Pershing last February, together with the epistle which you inclosed for him to direct to me.

Now in regard to that blooming letter you wrote General Pershing, I must say that you deserve the D. S. C. as a prize for skill, bravery, and triple-plated nerve. It was forwarded to me through military channels, finally reaching me with twelve indorsements. I added the thirteenth and returned it to Headquarters.

I am now wondering whether you can behave yourself until I return to the States, for I am sailing tomorrow.

Bob.

Form 1204

CLASS OF SERVICE SYMBOL	
Telegram	Blue
Day Letter	Blue
Night Message	Blue
Night Letter	Blue

WESTERN UNION
TELEGRAM

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. E. ATKINS, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

CLASS OF SERVICE SYMBOL

Telegram

Day Letter

Night Message

Night Letter

Blue

Blue

Blue

Blue

If none of these three symbols are used, the message is a day letter. If the symbol is a blue, the message is a night message. If the symbol is a blue, the message is a night letter. If the symbol is a blue, the message is a night letter.

RECEIVED AT 9:25AM. No. 4 H JM 9 875th Co. T.O. Newport News, Va. 7/5th-1919

Miss Vee Dee Eise T----- Tenn

Arrived Newport News safe Only short stay here feeling fine

Bob

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED		MEMBER'S NO.	
TELEGRAM		CRIME	
DAY LETTER		CLASS OF CHARGE	
NIGHT MESSAGE		TIME FILED	
NIGHT LETTER	X		

Please check mark in box
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 If you desire a message
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 WILLIAM H. MILLER, JR.

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. S. ATKINS, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

Send the following message subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

T----- Tenn July 5-1919.

Sergt. Bee O Bee

875th Co.T.C. Newport News Va.

Telegram received. Of course you're muchly grieved at
getting back so please accept my deepest sympathy.
Letter of welcome is on the way-

Big Sis.

July 5th, 1919.

And so you've come back to Uncle Sam! *Poor Uncle Sam*,—how did he seem to stand the shock of your arrival? I hope it will not put him entirely out of commission, for he's a good old scout and should not be forced to undergo such a strain at his age in life. But of course you're young and thoughtless and did not stop to consider the untoward effect that your homecoming might have upon his delicate nervous system.

I should think France would be a nice place to live. Didn't you like it?

Now I realize that you're not altogether to blame for coming back, for of course when the other boys began to board the ship which was bound for U. S. A. it was only natural for you to want to follow suit. But—well, Mr. Shakespeare says we mustn't grieve over spilled milk; so as far as I'm concerned I intend to accept the inevitable with resignation and try to make the best of it, remembering that "From the day you're born till you ride in a hearse There's nothing so bad but it might be worse."

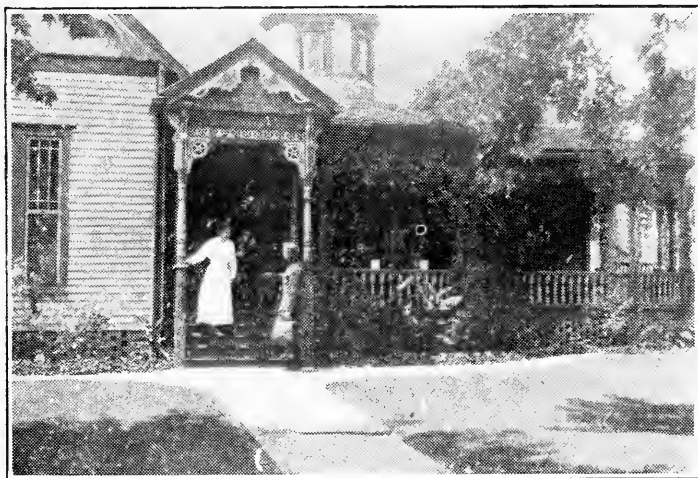
Big Sis.

THE MEETING.

Time—July, 1919.

Place—A number-one *good* place!

Scene—A sleeping patient; a trained nurse, and a knock at the front door.



“Is this you, Sis?”

“Sure—and this is—BOB?”

“You’re right.”

“Rats! why didn’t you let me know when you were coming for I had planned such a nice reception for you.”

“RATS,—I can just imagine what a trap it was too, and that’s the very reason I slipped up on you!”

“Yes, I had planned to adorn myself in raiments such as Solomon never dreamed of, and to meet you at the station in a ramshackle wagon drawn by an aboriginal *Dear Kate!* I had also plan—”

“Oh, darn your plans!—I’m glad I’ve played the deuce with *one* of ’em! And say, girl, I’ve also succeeded in getting even with Evolution,—for the experiences that I’ve had during the last twelve months have added twenty years to my life. How’s that for SPEED!”

THE END.

P. S. For further particulars read the sequel.

SEQUEL

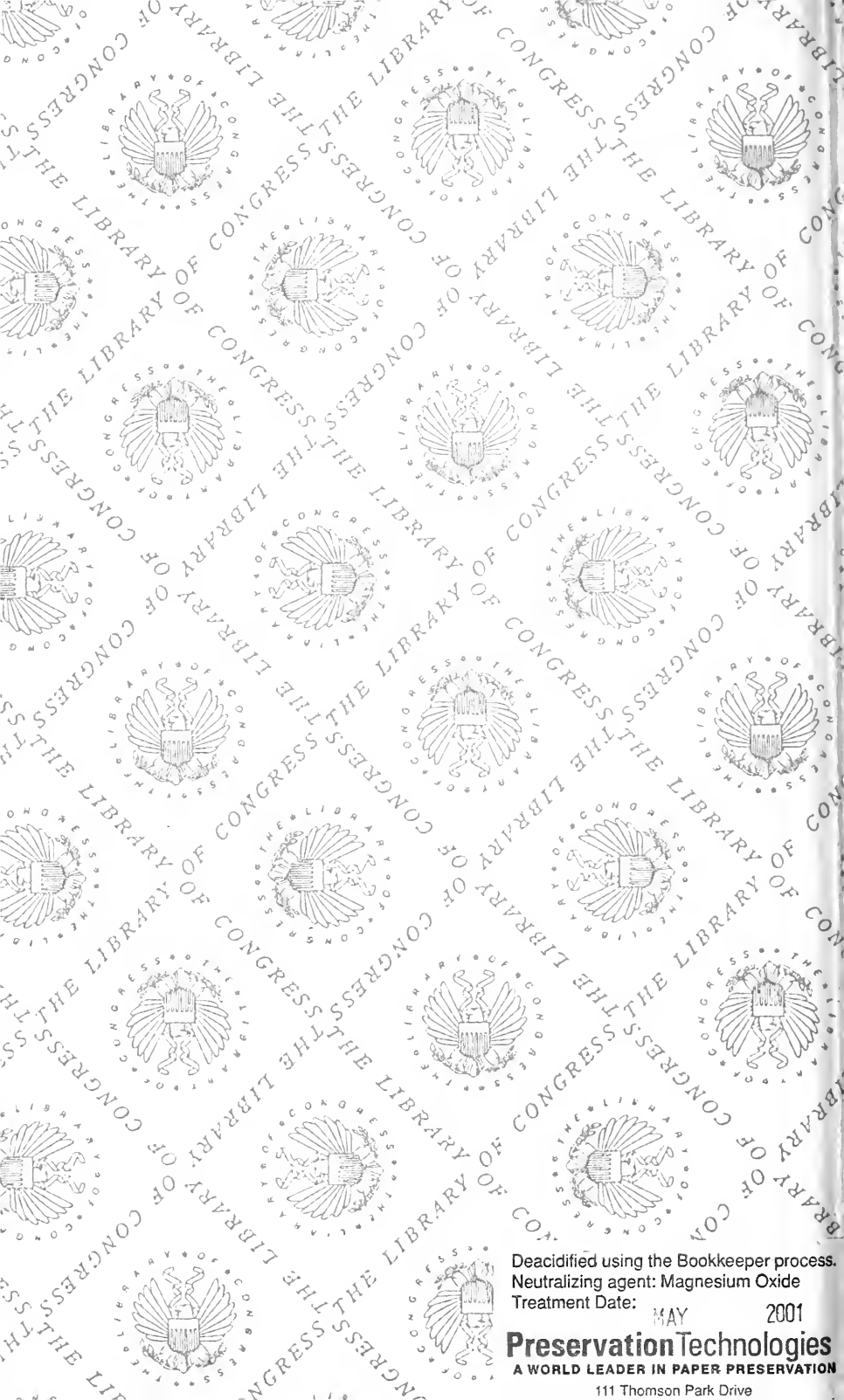


“UP WENT THE BUCKET!”—*Ain't that the dickens?*

by

63-79

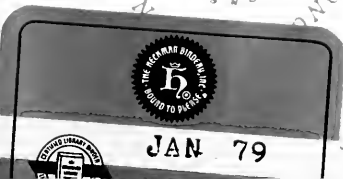
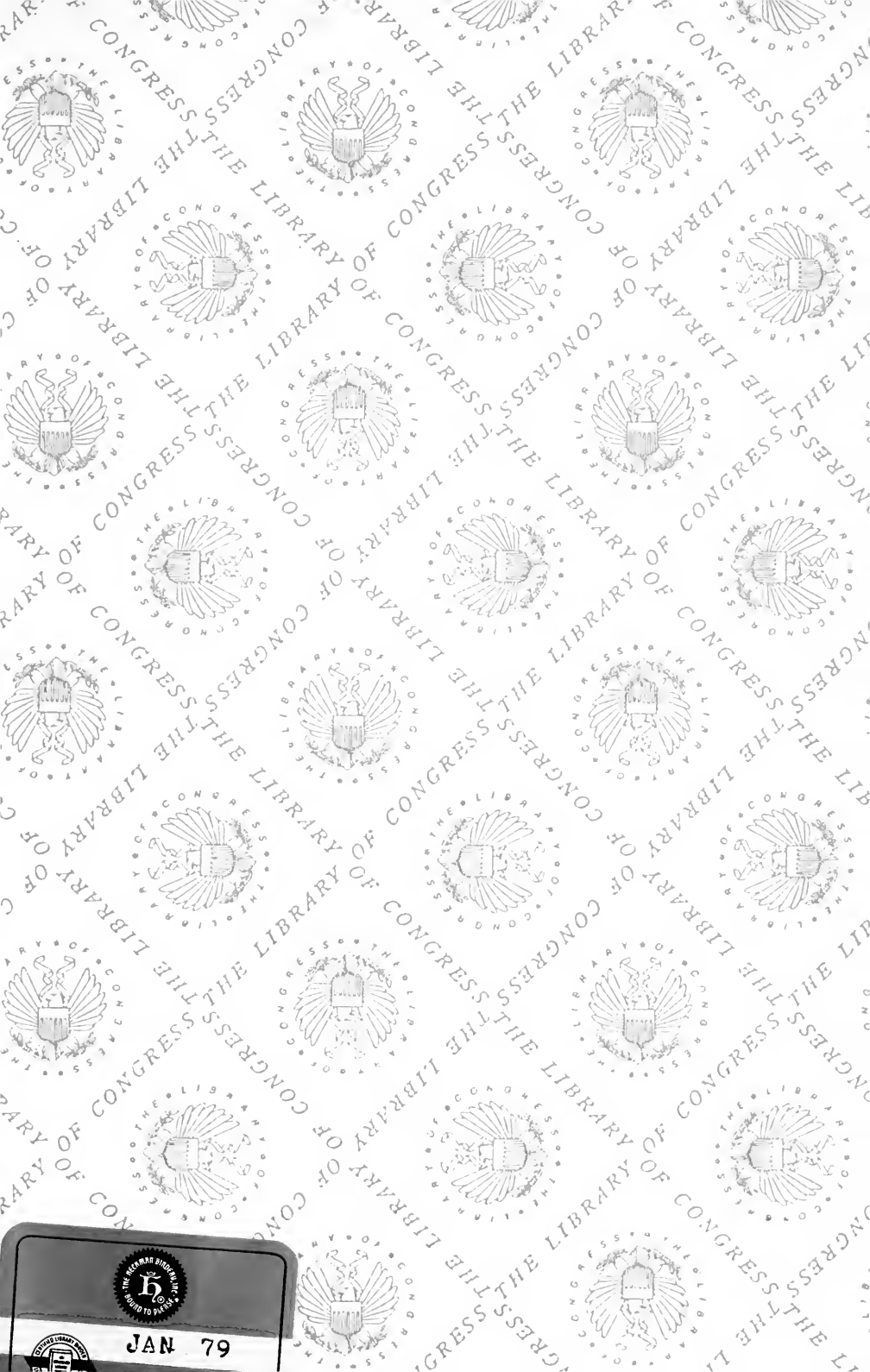




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